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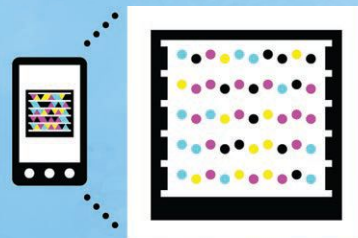
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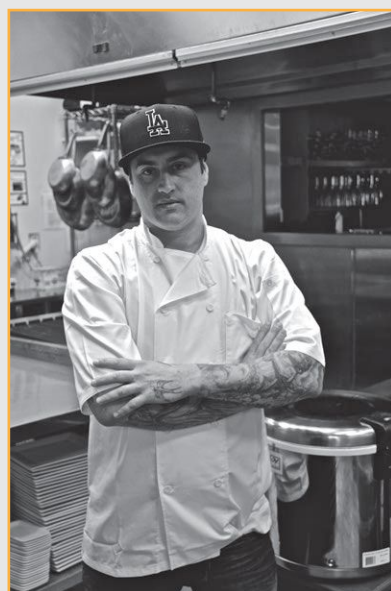
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COMING HOME TO THE MEDITERRANEAN

The Medii in Medii Kitchen is a culmination of ideas. Flavors of the Mediterranean, passed along from restaurateurs Chris and Raffi Sarkissian's mother, inhabit their establishment. Wrought-iron chandeliers and ornate wall sconces bring a Medieval gravitas to the dining room, yet the ambiance is relaxed. A plate of jalapeno-spiced tapenade with fresh, fried pita chips is offered to every table. The pairing is a study in balance.



Chris Sarkissian

They offer a glimpse of what's in store for patrons, as they struggle to save room for the next course.

Request their signature trio of dips and welcome a shareable platter of creamy hummus, babaghanoush and rosy muhamara. Slather the spreads on warmed, homemade pita bread. Falafel purists are treated to a bronzed quartet of egg-sized croquettes, prepared to order. A deep-fried cocoon shields their delicate interior. Those craving richness will try a savory halloumi grilled cheese. Medii's version deviates from traditional fare with a pita base, finished with drizzled olive oil and mint.

Quail is infused with citrus and garlic before being fired over open flame. We strongly recommend diners forgo modesty and grasp the poultry to maximize every bite. Densely packed chicken shawerma wraps are accompanied by crisp, matchstick fries flecked with coriander and garlic. Juicy, charbroiled chicken makes any salad selection a complete meal. Yet the most memorable entrée has to be a pair of marinated Australian lamb skewers. The luxurious tenderloin cut possesses a flavor that melts in one's mouth.

Medii Kitchen's communal table is where to-go clientele prefer to linger with a glass of wine or draft beer. During warmer seasons, enclosed patio seating is another alternative. Sip a refreshing pomegranade—an alcohol-free blend of pink lemonade and pomegranate juice poured in a Mason jar. Custom, hand-crafted dining tables and seats accommodate intimate groups.

With over a decade of experience owning and operating the Pepz Pizza and Eatery chain throughout Orange County, Chris' decision to return to his culinary roots and showcase some of their favorite recipes is a turning point. On any given day, one or more family members can be found prepping in the kitchen. Mom specializes in their muhamara dip, made from pomegranate molasses, pepper paste and walnuts. The blend of ingredients imparts a spicy finish. Her kibbeh-making skills are incomparable.

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up front

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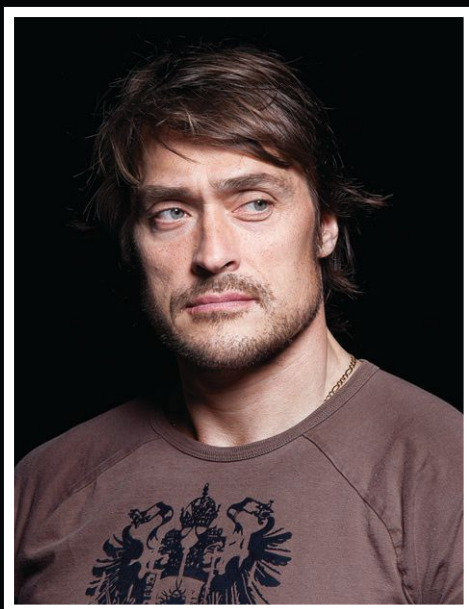
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UP WITH OC PEOPLE!

For years, this infernal rag has run special issues that included profiles of awesome people (with an accompanying glamor shot) who never could quite make it into our paper's regular rotation of crime, sex and *taquerías*, but who definitely deserved the love. We loved writing them because it allowed us to shine a spotlight on the amazing folks who are Orange County's saving grace: the community activist, the clubs promoter, the chef at the front of the latest culinary phenomenon, the religious mensch, and so forth.

Flash forward to a couple of years ago, and our big-sister paper, *LA Weekly*, created an entire issue devoted to such profiles, deeming it the "People" issue. The special edition (complete with three different covers) proved such a smash that other papers in our chain lovingly took the idea and made it theirs. So, as Dylan once screeched, we're bringing it all back

home and debuting our first People issue!

Inside are 30 full-page profiles shot by our house photographer, John Gilhooley. You'll find many of the unearthed gems we're famous for uncovering, as well as some big names you'd think we'd never bother with because we try to be oh-so-cool (we root for the Anaheim Ducks, too, you know, and Teemu Selänne was a class act whom we wish other pro athletes would emulate). You'll laugh, you'll cry, you'll plotz. We look forward to turning OC People into an annual tradition à la Summer Guide and Scariest People, so take a copy from your favorite rack and spread the love. And if you want to meet some of these people, check out our first Artopia event on March 22 at the Yost Theater, where we'll present them with plaques for being so damn awesome. Enjoy!

GUSTAVO ARELLANO



PEOPLE 2013 PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHN GILHOOLEY



JOHN GILHOOLEY

TRUST THIS TRUSTEE BAO NGUYEN

BY MARILYNN MONTANO

IN 2000, UC Irvine student Bao Nguyen made national headlines when he and other classmates stood at the edges of a John McCain rally in Little Saigon wearing T-shirts reading, “American Gook.” They were criticizing the then-presidential candidate for so easily using the anti-Vietnamese slur during interviews; pro-McCain Vietnamese activists wouldn’t have it, humiliating Nguyen and his friends with slurs, shoves and even saliva.

— | PEOPLE ISSUE | —

Thirteen years later, Nguyen now favors suits as a member of the Garden Grove Unified School District Board of Trustees, but his passion to do what’s right and criticize what’s wrong has only increased. Last month, in the face of Tet parade organizers who refused to allow a Vietnamese LGBT group to march in their event, he not only publicly announced he would not participate in the parade, but he also convinced his fellow trustees to vote against appearing.

“Acknowledging our differences and being able to celebrate together distinguishes my homeland from my mother’s homeland,” the son of Vietnamese refugees said during the trustee meeting. “But I will not forget where I came from. Remember, a free and democratic society is not necessarily defined by a majority, but defined by how one allows others the same liberties one wishes for oneself.”

The stance was the ultimate homecoming for Nguyen, who grew up in Garden Grove and graduated from Pacifica High School. His experiences as a student gave him a need to give back and change locally. “Sometimes, I feel the system doesn’t represent our community,” he says. “I have that relationship, the kind I can bring to the table where I got trained as a community organizer really young, and also a policy. I feel like an artist, and politics is my medium.”

Fluent in English, Vietnamese and Spanish, Nguyen is a politician equally at home working a crowd of wealthy donors or DIY activists at a son jarocho show. The Democratic Party salivates at the idea of running the charismatic, kind, razor-sharp Nguyen for higher office and to break the historic monopoly the GOP has had on Little Saigon, but electoral aspirations are an afterthought for the 32-year-old. Currently, he is working on a project to get interpreting services in health care for Californians through collecting the testimonies of people with limited English-language access. He plans to return to school to earn a doctorate—in what subject, though, he’s still not sure. After all, it’s not about him.

“I want to equip our kids for the future and give them the opportunities I didn’t have,” says Nguyen.

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DOC PROMOTORA AMERICA BRACHO

BY MARILYNN MONTANO

AMERICA BRACHO WAS living the immigrant dream for years. The Venezuelan native was the director of AIDS programming for Latino families in Detroit, toiling alongside community health workers and youth in their mission to create dialogue and awareness about sexually transmitted diseases and promote aid and prevention. And then she got a call from an agency in Orange County.

PEOPLE ISSUE

"I have to confess: I was hesitant to think OC was the place where I wanted to be," she says. "I thought OC was healthy and wealthy, so I didn't want to bring my focus and energy to a place where there was no need for my help."

But the person on the other line persisted, and Bracho moved to Orange County in 1991. Starting with a radio show on which she gave medical advice to the

area's many undocumented immigrants, Bracho went on to start Latino Health Access in 1993, a pioneering organization that has achieved national acclaim with a revolutionary approach: Instead of seeking trained professionals, Bracho recruits the very immigrants affected by health issues and trains them to preach the gospel of good health practices to their respective neighborhoods. Known

as the *promotores* (promoters) system, it's the ultimate example of preventative medicine and has saved county taxpayers millions of dollars in the long run.

"We do not target people as case studies for examining," says Bracho. "We *are* them."

Bracho's innovative approach comes from her years of adolescent volunteering and involvement in her own country, which helped her to notice the core issues of health disparities. "I truly wanted to transform health care in Venezuela," she says, but she encountered an unreliable health-care system that left her frustrated. "I was serving the same kids with the same diseases, and I wanted to change that reality."

She left her homeland to earn a master's degree in public health at the University of Michigan, which led to her Detroit gig. But it was in OC where her radical plans bore fruit; over the years, she has served as a presenter, trainer and consultant for many agencies that focus on Latino health, community organizing, parenting classes, women's

health and health education.

"I wanted to do things differently, and in every process that I was involved, the people making the decisions were the same who were from these institutions," said Bracho. "It was never the community making their own central decisions—if you're not on the table when it comes to issues and decisions, then it is easy to forget who you are fighting for and how critically important it is to invite the community to be part of every detail of decision."

This year marks Latino Health Access's 20th anniversary, and what started solely with Bracho now has 42 paid community workers, 300-plus volunteers (the vast majority of them teens) and a legendary tamale fund-raiser featuring a healthy recipe. The foundation just opened a park and community center in downtown Santa Ana, right in the heart of one of the most crowded tracts in Southern California. "It's our birthday, so we are the ones giving these presents to our own community," says Bracho. "We are each other's cheerleaders."

THE MOGULS SCOTT BURNHAM AND BRYON WARD

BY DAVE LIEBERMAN

TWO AND A HALF YEARS AGO, Jeff Duggan of Portola Coffee was full of enthusiasm for his move to the South Coast Collection. “It’s going to be Orange County’s answer to the Ferry Building market in San Francisco,” he told the *Weekly* in 2010. We nodded indulgently. A major nexus of design and food in Orange County? *Riiiiight*.

PEOPLE ISSUE

Fastforward 30 months to any typical Saturday morning in the dense warren of shops that makes up the SoCo Collection and the OC Mix, and the line for Duggan’s Portola Coffee snakes around the obliquely angled hallways. A couple browses through Deer Lovely, looking at the artisanal clothes for sale; from next door, Maxwell Frederick talks about German cheese with a woman planning a party; and a young boy asks to go see if the Chuck Jones Center for Creativity is hosting one of its occasional children’s drawing workshops.

Outside, shoppers make their way slowly from Rolling Greens through the SoCo Farmers Market to the Orange County outpost of Surfas; small clots of people cross the entrance to the newly opened, enormous Design Within Reach. People stroll through

Fixtures Living, where clients can try out kitchens before buying them. It’s the closest thing Orange County has to a village square; if you walk through the OC Mix on any given day, you’ll see someone you know.

So who are the modern-day Segerstroms behind the SoCo Collection? While Scott Burnham and Bryon Ward are unknown to most Orange Countians, they are well-known to anyone who has worked in commercial real estate in the past 20-plus years. Burnham graduated from USC and has worked in OC commercial real estate for almost 40 years; Ward is a former wunderkind and senior executive at Grubb Ellis. They look like any other developers, but behind those ties lies a spark of genius.

“The Orange County retail and food perspective can be sterile sometimes,” says Burnham. “The alternatives are often chains,” which is just a nod to Orange County’s stereotypical love affair with safe, preportioned life experiences.

Fair enough. But why the emphasis on food, specifically farm-to-table experiences? “Food is an expression of design,” says Ward. “People who care about design care about food, too.” This means there

won’t ever be a chain restaurant at SoCo; it doesn’t fit into Burnham and Ward’s vision for the property.

The men are mavericks in that they don’t fill space just to fill space; the tenants of the OC Mix are the most carefully curated in the county. Burnham and Ward will bend over backward to build out for the right tenant, and they turn away potentially more lucrative businesses. The space in the complex is 100 percent committed at this point, which seems impossible given how choosy they have been in order to avoid redundancy and mismatches. “There are always ways to get the right people in,” says Burnham, “but we’re at the point now where people are coming to us.”

Just because the property is nominally full doesn’t mean the work stops; there are improvements planned for the farmers’ market, and they’re considering starting a night market, something Orange County desperately needs. There will be more and bigger charity events, there are ideas for a coffee-making museum, and they’re planning to build a large herb garden for Greenleaf Chopshop.

It took 30 months—the blink of an eye in development terms—but Orange County has its downtown.



JOHN GILHOOLEY



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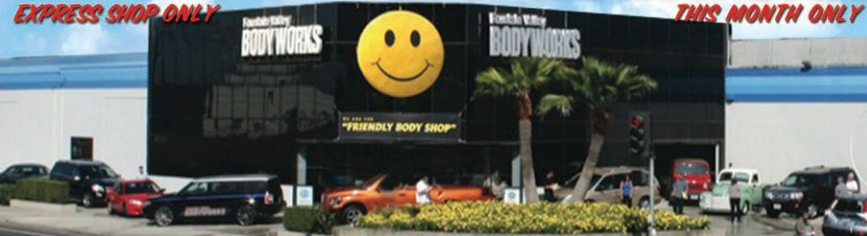
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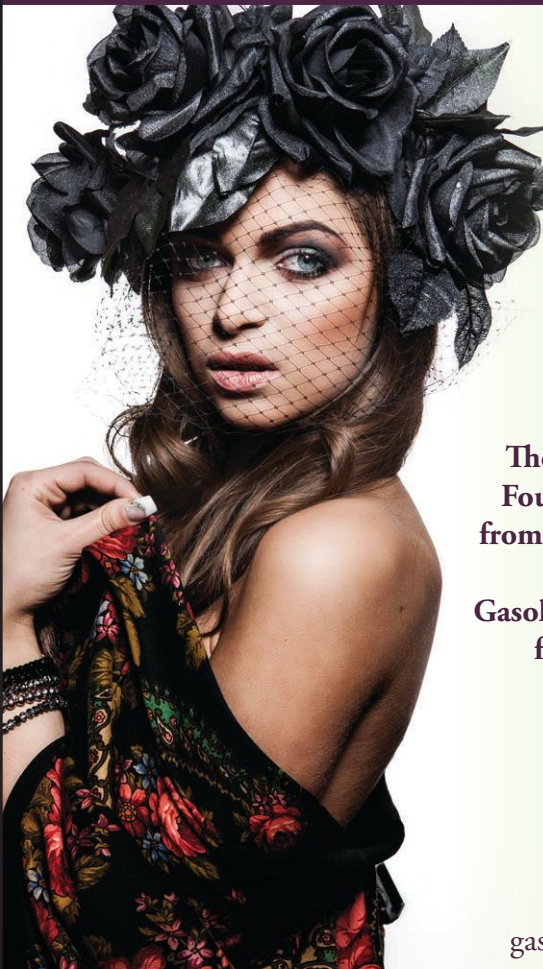
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SISTER LAWYER AMEENA QAZI

BY GUSTAVO ARELLANO

AMEENA QAZI WAS in her first year of law school at Wayne State University in Detroit when a professor gave the female students fashion advice that amused her.

PEOPLE ISSUE

“She was telling us how to dress when we argue cases in front of a judge,” says the Fullerton resident, who’s the deputy executive director and lead attorney for the Council on American Islamic Relations’ (CAIR) Los Angeles chapter (which, contrary to its name, is based in Anaheim). “They like to see pencil skirts and form-fitting blouses,” she’s telling us women. And I remember thinking, ‘No. I’m going to wear my trousers; I’m going to wear my headscarf. Judges should value us for who we are—and we are darn good lawyers.’”

Qazi has lived life loving to be underestimated. The daughter of a Pakistani immigrant and Wisconsin native of German-Scotch-Irish descent who converted to Islam, she’s naturally unassuming and soft-spoken, and she looks far younger than her 31 years. “I’m a young woman who wears a headscarf. It’s hard to get people to see what you offer,” she admits. But beneath that soft demeanor lies a lawyer who has been at the forefront of civil rights in Southern California the past couple of years, especially when defending Muslims. In her five years at CAIR, Qazi and her staff have done everything from run civil-liberties workshops to sue on behalf of a woman who claimed discrimination at Disneyland to going after the federal government over its role in the Craig Monteilh mosque-spy case. “Some people say we’re hyper-reactive, but we actually try to perform triage before anything else,” Qazi says. “People will call me and say, ‘Sister Ameena, this happened to me.’ They don’t want to make a big deal. But that’s disempowering—we *should* speak up. Even if we lose a case, it’s not necessarily bad. No matter what the case, if it’s something wrong, we take that stand in favor of the good. *That* is the victory.”

Defending the rights of Muslims wasn’t something Qazi initially set out to do. After earning her law degree, she worked on community projects, including an interfaith performance-art group that Qazi says still serves as inspiration for her courtroom arguments. But the self-admitted lover of the Bill of Rights became increasingly concerned about the legal problems

Muslims in Southern California began to encounter in a post-9/11 world—unlawful monitoring, workplace discrimination, demagogic politicians, no-fly lists—so she joined CAIR. “I’ve always wanted to help out the little guy, and I got that from my parents,” she says, remembering a story from her childhood about how her family once passed by another family living out of their van. “We went home, gathered food for the family and dolls for the little girls, and went right back and gave them those presents. And my Dad told us, ‘What you have is a gift from God. It’s not necessarily yours. Do what you can with it because there’s no other way.’”

The incident happened in the South Bay, which is also where Qazi’s latest legal victory occurred. In Lomita, the City Council had denied a permit for a new mosque proposed by the Islamic Center of the South Bay—Qazi’s childhood house of worship. CAIR sued the city, alleging discrimination; the federal government helped to settle the case earlier this year, and construction on the mosque will commence soon.

Qazi takes strides to diminish her influence. “I’m just a drop in the ocean of this movement,” she insists. But she does take pride in letting Muslims know that their lives in this country shouldn’t be one of fear. “When you use all these ‘nots’ to define you—*not* terrorists, *not* a religion of hate, *not* foreigners—it chips away at who you are,” Qazi says. “But helping people stand for who you are—citizens, Americans, neighbors—that’s an act of empowerment, and has a huge effect on everyone.”



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THE CATHOLIC WORKERS DWIGHT AND LEIA SMITH

BY DAVE BARTON

"WHEN I FEED THE POOR, THEY CALL ME A SAINT. WHEN I ASK WHY THE POOR ARE HUNGRY, THEY CALL ME A COMMUNIST."

—DOM HÉLDER CÂMARA

PEOPLE ISSUE

IN JANUARY 1993, Dwight and Leia Smith, members of the Catholic Worker movement, began volunteering at Isaiah House in downtown Santa Ana. The massive, two-story, 100-year-old building is a far cry from the minimalist, (very) expensive condo/lofts of the Artists Village, just a pebble's throw away, but 50 previously homeless women (and their children) call it home. The Smiths began running the Hospitality House in 1997 and serve more than 2,500 meals each week to people at their home and in the Civic Center, doing it all with the help of volunteers donating time and money.

Since the downturn in the economy, the already-slim safety net for Orange County's poor has become increasingly difficult to negotiate, as floods of people (especially women and children) end up on the street. With every social service foundation stretched thin, to what do the Smiths owe their longevity in the movement?

Dwight laughs. When he started, he says, he tried to rescue everyone, that it was a "huge struggle not to be a narcissistic pinnacle of redemption," and what saved him from that spiritual hubris was being a "member of a team": his wife, the Catholic Worker community, its volunteers and even the Catholic Church "when it can get out of its own way." Her work in the movement gave Leia the opportunity to "take things beyond my beliefs and opinions" into the realm of action, calling it human beings' collective goodness "that allows us to sense that we belong to each other no matter what."

Age, poverty and the stress of caregiving can take their toll, however, and the Smiths have had health issues to contend with over the past years. "Health care is still the last night terror," says Dwight, who went without it for many years—until Obamacare. It came not a moment too soon, said his doctor: Smith was a major contender for a heart attack if he'd gone much longer without.

When Leia's doctor gave her the news she had cancer, she went home, sat on

her bed and pondered with clear-eyed gratitude what appeared to be a limited future. "How lucky am I?" she thought. "I'm doing what has value. I have everything I need. How many people get to think deeply about why the world is in the condition it's in and also see their place in it?"

The harmony of heart and soul that co-exists with activism sustained them, and both are healthier than they have been in years. Leia recovered from her bout with the Big C, and Dwight's issues are controlled by medication and dietary change. "We get to experience the very best of people," says Dwight. "Our lifestyle is a lot less damaging than others, so we need a lot less recovery."

When asked to impart a last message to *Weekly* readers, their thoughts turn (again) to others: Leia says the house has an ongoing need for donations of new (not used) underwear for men and women, as well as socks, razors and deodorant. "Hygiene is important to people," bestowing dignity on an often undignified situation, she says.

Dwight requests you write or call the five members of the Orange County Board of Supervisors and ask them who cares for the 400 people per night helped at local armories in Fullerton and Santa Ana the eight months of the year they're closed. You can find contact information from the Board of Supervisors at ocgov.com/gov/bos.



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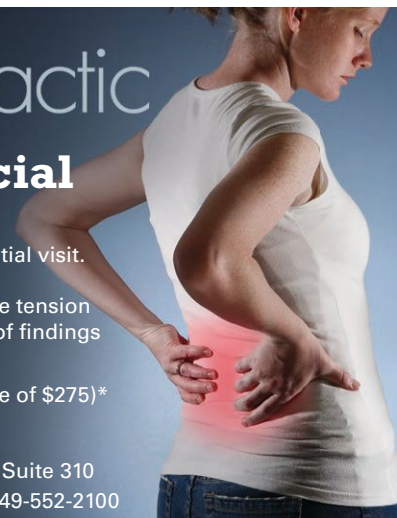
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In 1980, Oscar Navarro began working for David as a shoe repairman at the young age of 20. Oscar Navarro, a second generation cobbler who came to the US from Mexico, had to overcome numerous cultural barriers. However, he was immediately fascinated by the world of shoe making and the potential Capri held for great future success. It was Oscar's vision, and later turned reality, to transform Capri Shoes from the small shoe repair shop into an international business renowned for its fine, handcrafted, custom-made shoes. In 1992 upon David's retirement, Oscar Navarro acquired ownership of the company.

Capri Shoes has since witnessed an exponential growth. Its original three employees have multiplied to more than 20 full time shoe experts; each contributing with their exceptional skills to handcraft our one of kind quality products. Capri however not only offers a full service of professional footwear for film, theatre, and stage, but we also offer one-of-a-kind custom shoes for the discriminate buyer looking to create a specific fashion forward look, or re-create an un-findable favorite. Capri Shoes provides highly functional, quality footwear, which meet the highest performance and design standards crafted to create the most comfortable fit. "We want to offer the public something totally unique" states Oscar Navarro. "Designers come to us with drawings of a character, and we turn that cartoon into a reality".

It has been Oscar's passion, dedication, and ingrained enthusiasm for new challenges which have paved the way for Capri's success. Today, Capri has built a reputation for excellence and innovation that is recognized in the shoe-making, and theatre entertainment industry, amongst many others. In honor of this great legacy, we begin the next 50 years with the utmost enthusiasm and vision for another 50 years of great success and growth. We invite the community, local business owners, designers, and government officials to join us on this special event.

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THE ORGANIZER DENISE VELASCO

BY GABRIEL SAN ROMÁN

LONG BEFORE ENLISTING herself in Orange County's labor wars, back when she was a high-school student at Mater Dei in Santa Ana, Denise Velasco got her first taste of political discourse. The polarizing winds of California's anti-immigrant Proposition 187 were still gusting after its passage at the state ballot box in 1994, and Velasco was sitting in Spanish class when her instructor raised the issue. A white girl with impeccable Spanish spoke up. "*Bueno, yo pienso que los ilegales no tienen derecho,*" she said, "*porque nuestros papás pagan impuestos.*"

PEOPLE ISSUE

Translation: Illegals have no right to be here because our parents pay taxes.

Velasco, the daughter of Mexican immigrants, was upset by what she heard. Overcoming her shyness, she raised her hand. "The people you're talking about look like me!" The rebuttal may not have caused much of a stir in the classroom,

but it ignited a sense of personal dignity in Velasco, one that has guided the rest of her life.

A few years later, U.S. Congresswoman Loretta Sanchez visited an AP government class at Mater Dei, where she was grilled by the same student who earlier spoke up in favor of Prop.

187. Sanchez responded by making a reference to her predecessor, whom she had defeated. "That's my dad," the girl exclaimed. When Bob Dornan's daughter revealed herself, Velasco says, "Everything clicked!"

Velasco ventured northward to attend UC Berkeley. After graduation, family ties brought her back to the southland with plans of becoming a high-school history teacher. But an internship with the Service Employees International Union's Justice for Janitors campaign would seemingly cement her place in OC. "Everybody has this notion that LA is where organizing is at," she says, "but, for me, it's really needed here."

After a five-year stint with Justice for Janitors, Velasco, who now resides in Costa Mesa, lent her talents to SEIU Local 721, coordinating OC political campaigns for the union's Independent Expenditure wing. It was there that she would eventually cross paths with a precinct walker named Yesenia Rojas, who introduced her to the working-class community of Anna Drive in Anaheim.

In July 2012, Velasco, 32, had just finished her master's degree at Harvard Kennedy School when a fatal officer-involved shooting and subsequent, videotaped assault on a crowd of protesters sent shockwaves through Anaheim. In the months that followed, residents wanted to form an association out of the trauma, and Unidad: United Neighbors in Dignity of Anna Drive was born. There has been a heavy emphasis on neglected youth and providing them with various workshops.

Unidad will be honoring Santo Toribio, the Catholic patron saint of immigrants with a *peregrinación* (pilgrimage) on April 14, an event that underscores how faith continues to play a role in maintaining the collective strength of the residents. "It's something in myself that I haven't been as connected to," Velasco says reflecting on the personal as well as the political.

"It reminds me a lot of organizing with the janitors," she says of her experiences in Anna Drive. "Situations can be so dire, but people always find a way to survive."

THE CURE SEEKER DEBRA MILLER

BY JAYNEE MATHIS

Eleven years ago, when Debra Miller's son Hawken was 5 years old, doctors diagnosed him with Duchenne, a rare type of muscular dystrophy that leads to a loss of muscle cells; severe medical complications typically occur in early adulthood and cause irreversible lung and heart catastrophes. Instead of following the advice to go home and love their son, giving up hope for a cure, Miller and her husband instead created a nonprofit organization called CureDuchenne.

PEOPLE ISSUE

As the foundation's chief executive officer, Miller devotes most of her time, energy and sanity to the efforts of finding a cure for her son's so-far-incurable disease. She personally signed off on the nonprofit giving \$1.3 million in contributions to a small, Netherlands-based scientific research company.

"Oh, we were scared to death when we signed the contract, but we knew we were going to do it," Miller recalls. "At that point, we could not see where the funding was going to come from, but we believed so strongly in science. . . . If I could open up my body and give him every ounce of muscle that I have, I would do it."

The Millers had only a fraction of the cash saved, so they resorted to begging, borrowing and fund-raising to come up with the rest, a process that took two years. Miller's next move required her to utilize her past and her savvy business experience to push forward. A UCLA graduate with a bachelor's degree in communication studies, Miller had climbed the corporate ladder, working for a PC magazine and earning upward of \$300,000 per year. (After her son was born, she left her job to be a stay-at-home mom.)

Under her direction, CureDuchenne attracted several well-placed yet small investments that ultimately attracted much larger contributions from venture-capital companies, which snowballed into hundreds of millions of dollars being invested into drugs with life-saving potential.

Although her husband supports the foundation's efforts, he spends four days of the week working in San Antonio, Texas. Meanwhile, Miller provides home care for her son, cooking, cleaning, nurturing his curiosities and helping him with simple, everyday tasks. When she's not being a mom, she focuses on planning awareness events, fund-raising millions of dollars and tracking the science of a rare muscular disease that remains incurable.

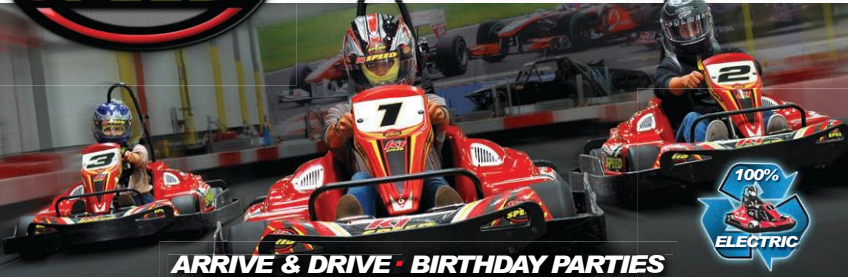
Miller's goal is simple: She wants to close up shop, and she wants boys with Duchenne to live long, normal lives. "I just want Hawken to be a good dad," she says. "I just want him to have the joy he brought to us. There is nothing like it, absolutely nothing like it, and that's my biggest dream."



JOHN GILHOOLEY



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THE HATE FIGHTER KEVIN O'GRADY

BY GUSTAVO ARELLANO

FOR THE PAST DECADE, Kevin O'Grady was one of the most prominent fighters against bigotry in Orange County. As regional director of the Orange County-Long Beach region for the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), it was the task of the Brighton, England, native of Irish stock to smoke out the neo-Nazis, anti-gay fools and Mexican-bashers who make this county one of the nation's premier hater havens. It was a job he loved, a job O'Grady knew was important, a job he planned to stay at for a long time—and then a friend approached him during a Hannukah party.

PEOPLE ISSUE

The friend told O'Grady the executive director position was available at the Center OC, Orange County's oldest LGBTQ organization, and asked if he would be interested in applying. On a lark, O'Grady went for an interview—and promptly bombed. “I had the flu,” he admits, adding he didn’t know of all the great work the Center did.

But O'Grady did eventually get the job in March of last year, and he quickly caused waves in a region that has bashed homosexuals at every possible level for decades. A youth group associated with the Center, Youth Empowered to Act (YETA), protested the opening of a Chick-fil-A in Laguna Hills, an action that netted national attention. He established collaborations with health organizations, community groups and

activists across the county, so much so that the Center's two-story Santa Ana office is maxed-out; O'Grady is looking to expand its operations to satellite campuses. And just last month, the Center provided support to LGBTQ Vietnamese who tried to march in the Tet Parade.

For an organization that long operated quietly, such upfront advocacy endeared O'Grady to activists who have wished the Center would take a more prominent role in OC gay life.

“One thing I learned from my time at the ADL is the importance of coalitions and standing for yourself,” O'Grady says. “We can't support ourselves and expect others to help us if we can't help them. The more we stand up, the more empowered we become. So instead of just one community, we can stand up collectively to tell people, ‘Back the fuck off.’”

He's continuing to work his magic. The Center's April 20 fund-raiser will have as an honored guest Minnesota Vikings punter (and OC native) Chris Kluwe, who is the group's Torchbearer Award recipient for his hilarious attacks on anti-gay idiots. O'Grady is using his ADL tools to ferret out anti-gay actions in all corners of OC life—for instance, there's an alarming number of gay seniors going back into the closet at senior homes so as to not face discrimination, and some people in South County have lost their jobs because of their sexual orientation.

He has been turning the magnifying glass on gays in OC, a widespread, fractious group. “We're as divided as any other racial or ethnic group,” O'Grady admits. “We need to go after the phobias in our own community. I don't buy people who say we can't make a difference—we all can.”

Further plans for the Center include offering more services across the county and engaging with high schools on anti-bullying campaigns. O'Grady can rattle off plans the way he once could name all the white-power groups in Orange County. “I love this job,” he says, “and I can't wait to make the Center the true center of LGBTQ life in OC.”

He pauses, then laughs. “But I do miss the Nazis. . . .”

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JOHN GILHOOLEY

THE STUDS TERKEL OF LITTLE SAIGON THUY VO DANG

BY R. SCOTT MOXLEY

WHEN THUY VO DANG'S Vietnamese-refugee family arrived in Santa Ana in the 1980s—after stops in Malaysia, the Philippines and Buffalo, New York—she learned that local whites had given a name to them, as well as the other immigrants who'd fled Ho Chi Minh's communist takeover of South Vietnam to land in Hazard Avenue apartments.

"They called us 'The Gooks of Hazard,'" a laughing Dang recalls. "At the time, I didn't know what it meant."

An acclaimed scholar with a milestone-loaded, seven-page résumé even though she left UC San Diego with a Ph.D. just five years ago, Dang is at the forefront of collecting and preserving stories about the Vietnamese American experience.

— PEOPLE ISSUE —

Dang, who was born in a poor Mekong Delta village called Tra Vinh, is the lead researcher/project coordinator for the Vietnamese American Oral History Project at UC Irvine, and she knows her mission is combating a lingering problem. Far too often, Vietnamese immigrants are stereotyped in the media as anti-communist fanatics, or—perhaps worse—in inane Hollywood action flicks as mumbling bumpkins. "Our community is diverse," the Garden Grove resident and Scripps College grad says. "I really want to show that."

Dang and her students have been busy finding immigrants willing to share their life experiences. The criteria are simple: be a Vietnamese American who is at least 30 years old and lives in Southern California. Audio-recorded interviews began in January 2012, and the group has already collected "life stories"—some sad, some hilarious—from 107 individuals. The public and future historians can access the audio files online (at sites.uci.edu/vaohp) or visit the university's Southeast Asian Archives to see transcripts in English and Vietnamese.

The project, which is funded in part by Southern California Edison and Wells Fargo Bank, faces two major hurdles. Older-generation immigrants are often reluctant to talk about painful memories such as those caused by the war. But even more problematic is that Dang is in a race against the clock: Each day, older refugees pass away. That further motivates the scholar and her students to find them.

"There are so many awe-inspiring stories," says Dang. "We don't want to permanently lose them."

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Beyond the personal accolades, however, is a lawyer who cares about the victims he represents. For one 22 year old tetraplegic whose spinal cord injuries resulted from his unprotected fall through a sky light, attorney Keith P. More obtained a settlement of \$14.7 million, the largest award in California workers' compensation history. Within 6 months Keith settled two other record-breaking cases, both against major corporations.

More recently, Keith was involved in a personal-injury wrongful death case that resulted in the largest wrongful death of a child verdict in Orange County history. He has been a member of the Million Dollar Advocates Club since 1994, and co-chaired the Workers' Compensation Section of the Orange County Bar Association in 2003 and in 2008 served as the president of the Orange County Trial Lawyers Association.

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ANGEL OF THE CANYON CHAY PETERSON

BY LP HASTINGS

CHAY PETERSON PUSHES back her chair and walks to a cubby on the wall at the end of her kitchen. She returns with a dead snake in her hand, maybe 4 or 5 inches long and hardened with age. She's keeping it to show to the local naturalist.

PEOPLE ISSUE

"People think my life started with canyon politics," she says.

Peterson is a petite woman with wild blond hair, and her voice is so light and airy it carries on the wind. Under this soft demeanor, though, she has become one of the greatest activists for the remaining rural areas of Orange County, specifically her home base of Silverado Canyon. Its oaks and scurrying critters are woven into her makeup. "I was a free spirit," she says, "and I didn't like to be held down, so I would just do what I wanted to do. . . I just wanted to go out and explore."

Her childhood memories are painted with lazy Sunday drives down Santiago Canyon Road and sticky, summer camping trips to O'Neill Park. She was hardly amused by what her home in Santa Ana had to offer. "When I was little and I was in the city, I would collect butterflies," she says and chuckles. "They were dead already. I just wanted their wings."

Eventually, after years of activism across the globe, including cycling to the USSR at the height of the Cold War on an anti-nukes mission (Soviet officials refused to let her in), she moved into the canyons of her childhood. In her 26 years there, Peterson has helped run the Silverado Children's Center, sometimes as the resident rattlesnake catcher. She and her husband raised funds to host a surf camp for their sons and other canyon teenagers. Peterson organized a group to travel to the south to rebuild homes after Hurricane Katrina and

started the Canyon Land Conservation Fund with a few other residents to fight the McMansion developments that try to crawl into the canyons every couple of years.

When horrific fires came to Silverado in 2007, the Petersons didn't evacuate. "We know all the trails that take you out of the canyon," she says, "so we didn't want to leave unless we had to. We figured we could be useful." Sneaking around the sheriffs, they took food to neighbors, fed pets and cleaned up tinderbox yards. "I love helping people during disasters," she says and laughs. "I don't know what it is. It's this psycho craziness that happens to me."

Peterson has been in this guardian-angel cycle since she was a kid. "When I was little, my mom did that. She was PTA, Bluebird Mom, Campfire Girls, she helped bring the bookmobile to Santa Ana, read English books to Mexican kids at the park," she says. "So when I got in a small community . . . I dunno, it was in my nature to care."

Everything Peterson does is with a streak of whimsy, in a way that seems as though it will keep her young forever, a fairy bouncing from treetop to treetop, her spirit contagious (she frequently dons fairy wings during Silverado shindigs). When she saw the natural hills she had romanticized as a child in danger of being pockmarked by suburban neighborhoods, she asked her friends, "Who's going to fight this? Where are the people?" She pauses, "And we walked out of the café that day knowing it was us."



JOHN GILHOOLEY

NO FLASH IN THE PAN TEEMU SELÄNNE

BY MATT COKER

THE ANAHEIM Ducks finished in fifth place and out of the playoffs in the National Hockey League's Pacific Division last season, but eternal optimist Teemu Selänne took away something positive.

"For the second half of the season, we were the third-best team in the league," the NHL's oldest skater says after a grueling, early-season practice at the Honda Center. "We want to be the team we were in the second half of last season. It takes everybody pushing this. This is the time to be pushing."

By March 1, the Ducks led the Pacific with an 14-3-1 record. And yet, after a practice at which coach Bruce Boudreau barked out commands as though his team were facing a clinching playoff game, Selänne remarked, "We can't be satisfied with our lead."

That same day, three different media sources, including the *Los Angeles Times*, posted on the 42-year-old's work ethic. So as Selänne ate lunch at a corner table long after his teammates had left the building, he was asked if his regimen is due to his age or just the way he's always done it.

"It's a little of both, but mostly it's about age," he confides. "The recovery time is so short anyway. It's tough; even the young players have to do the right things to recover as fast as they can. I know it helps" to work hard.

"It's a tough sport, you have to enjoy it. And I do," he says later. "Keeping up with the young guys, earning a spot—you cannot come back if you don't think you can play."

That he can. The future Hall-of-Famer is on the Ducks' second line this season with Bobby Ryan and Saku Koivu, but early in the season, they have often played like the first, taking over games, bringing

the team back from behind and leaving the rink credited with wins.

Despite leaving everything he physically can on the ice, what Selänne loves most about Orange County, what's convinced him that this'll be home for years to come, is he can truly kick back. Other than Disneyland, he knew nothing of this area while growing up in Helsinki. Though their names may confound their Coto de Caza mailman—his wife is Sirpa Vuorinen, and their children are sons Eemil, Eetu and Leevi and daughter Veera—they are now, according to the patriarch, "typical Californians."

"We love it," Selänne says. "I think this is the best place. The lifestyle, even if it is busy, it does not look busy. The warmer environment, the sun, it makes you happy, more relaxed."

He also likes that the few people who recognize him on the street respect his privacy. In Finland, he's a rock star. That gets trying at times, although his children "so far" still enjoy their yearly vacations to his homeland.

Despite a lockout-shortened season that has compacted everything in Selänne's life, in April, he plans to open Teemu's Tavern & Grill in the old French 75 space across from the Surf & Sand Resort in Laguna Beach. Having owned and operated four restaurants in Finland that were later sold to a chain, he has always wanted to open a place of his own here, to have something to look forward to once he puts down the stick, though he won't say when—and the way Selänne is currently playing, it might not be for a few more seasons.

"I might stay involved in hockey," he qualifies, "but I think the restaurant business will be exciting."



JOHN GILHOOLEY

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JOHN GILHOOLEY

TEACHER HOMBRE BENJAMIN VAZQUEZ

BY GUSTAVO ARELLANO

HIGH-SCHOOL TEACHERS get very few things named after them, and those few things that get attached to their names usually involve puerile playground chants or epithets hurled by people looking to choke public education dead. But if you visit Café Calacas in downtown Santa Ana, you'll find a sandwich named after Santa Ana Valley High School history teacher Benjamin Vazquez: the Don Benjamin—tuna salad with a chile/garlic/mayo spread, carrots, cilantro and red onion, served on a telera bread. It's a bracing, filling, brash metaphor for the Santa Ana native, who at the young age of 42 is already a public-education legend in the city.

It's not just Vazquez's accomplishments at his alma mater (and, before that, at Century High) in forging seemingly underachieving students into scholars, activists and artists; he's the Zelig of Chicano OC, volunteering and teaching at nearly every critical juncture in the movement. Santa Ana's

PEOPLE ISSUE

massive Día de los Muertos? Vazquez is in charge of trash duty and coordinating food vendors. The push by undocumented students for the DREAM Act? He has advised them in strategizing. Snarky T-shirts for fund-raisers? The son of Zacatecan immigrants lets groups use his screenprinting tools. Someone needs a grant? Call Ben. And if there's a protest somewhere in OC, you'll find Vazquez: burly, usually wearing a Panama hat and a guayabera, and cracking a laugh that can be heard all the way to the border.

Activism is a career Vazquez never imagined for himself. He admits to being a "moderate liberal" without a radical bone in his body when returning to Santa Ana in 2006 after teaching in Watts. Once back in his hometown, Vazquez realized that students at Willard Middle School needed activities for after school and during the weekends. After taking a group to various community centers only to find them closed, Vazquez approached the Centro Cultural de México, the legendary community space that has trained a generation of county activists. "I heard it was a community center—that's all I knew about it. I wanted to go drop off my kids there," he says, adding a hearty laugh. "I didn't want to get involved!"

But the Centro's DIY ethos immediately inspired him. "It was all volunteers—no one got paid," says Vazquez, who now sits on the board of directors and continues to teach art classes. "It inspired me to do my work there for free. I went from being a teacher of an institution to a community teacher—a *maestro del pueblo*. I learned how to manage via a non-hierarchical fashion."

Given Santa Ana (or, as Vazquez takes pride in calling it, SanTana) is one of the youngest cities in the county, the teacher *hombre* makes sure his students at Valley and at the Centro don't get off easy, scholastically: no rote memorization, but rather a teaching method based on Socratic dialogue, of Vazquez not so much lecturing as asking, prodding and inspiring. "I enjoy moving kids from one space to knowledge, to creating," he says. "So they can defend their community. Not only do you teach content, but you also have to teach culture and values. In an unjust world where immigrants are being attacked, you have to be able to create an identity where people can defend themselves from this injustice."

"I don't organize," Vazquez finally confesses. "I just show up."

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THE FIRST FAMILY OF BLUEBERRY DOUGHNUTS **JAMES, SANDY AND MICHELLE MA**

BY TAYLOR WEIK



JOHN GILHOOLEY

A CROWD LINGERS IN front of M & M Donuts in Anaheim, as rows of cars idle just outside. It's the middle of the night, temperatures are in the historic lows, yet several of the customers have waited for more than two hours. Then, deliverance.

"Do you smell that?" one of the customers pipes up. "It's coming! The blueberry doughnuts are coming!"

It's at this humble doughnut shop—really, a tiny drive-thru in the middle of a featureless parking lot—that Orange County's latest dessert craze began. Not cupcakes or even pies, but blueberry doughnuts: plump, blueberry-spotted beauties fried to a rich brown and smothered in a frosting-like glaze. M & M makes sure the treats are served scathing-hot in pizza boxes that barely contain the melting glaze and oil, so sinful you can gain 10 pounds by just sniffing them.

But the geniuses behind this phenomenon aren't hipsters. James and Sandy Ma were both born in China, but met and married in California after two months of dating in 1986. It was in Southern California that they decided to work for themselves by doing what they loved best: baking. The two have worked full-time ever since, even after giving birth to their only daughter, Michelle, whose initials were the inspiration behind the bakery's name.

PEOPLE ISSUE

"I remember as a little girl seeing piles and piles of blueberries on the shelves in the back and wondering what they were for," Michelle Ma says. "It'd be weird if my parents weren't in the doughnut business."

Weird, indeed. James and Sandy owned two doughnut shops before M & M—one in Placentia, another in Yorba Linda—and at all three ventures, they were the only two employees. "My parents are the only employees because if someone else besides them were to make the doughnuts, they just wouldn't taste the same," Michelle says. "They want to keep all the food original."

Though the Mas have showcased their blueberry doughnut recipe at every one of their bakeries, it wasn't until M & M opened in 2004 that people started to catch on to the guilty pleasure. One night, a large group bought a few dozen, and then others followed suit; from one random buy, M & M's fruity tale became an overnight sensation, and the story hasn't stopped, earning praise on social and regular media ever since.

James and Sandy work full-time, seven days a week, taking just two days off each year to vacation in Las Vegas. James is also an 11-year employee of WalMart. Michelle, meanwhile, is a full-time nursing student but takes over on weekends. The family comes in at 5 p.m. to knead dough and fire up the ovens, but just when it seems as though the late hours will provide some time to breathe, it's 9 p.m., and a line of eager doughnut-lovers has inevitably formed. The shop won't close until noon, giving just a couple of hours of rest before the next wave starts.

M & M turns 9 this month and doesn't show any signs of slowing down.

"My parents both came from nothing," Michelle says. "They started out in a new country with nothing and had to work hard to be able to get to where they are today; they wanted me to live the American Dream, and now I am. Besides that motivation, they bake because they love it. My parents genuinely love what they do. They love making doughnuts."



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THE MAYO MAN HARRISON KHO

BY EDWIN GOEI

AROUND THE FIRST part of 2012, the big question around town more pressing than which Republican candidate would eventually take the presidential nomination was what happened to Harry's Deli. The 2-year-old, office-park sandwich shop that bucked all logic and built up a cult-like following in a nowhere spot directly beneath the flight path of roaring John Wayne Airport-bound planes was suddenly and unceremoniously shuttered. Where was Harrison Kho? Where was his wife, Mercy? What happened to the wonderful sandwiches and hand-whipped mayo?

PEOPLE ISSUE

Turns out Harry had more serious issues to deal with. Mercy's pregnancy had some unforeseen complications, resulting in their second child being born three months premature at only 3 pounds, 6 ounces. Baby Abigail spent nearly two months in the natal intensive care unit, so the Khos visited her daily. The sandwiches would have to wait. "She was our main priority at the time," Harry says.

But as the months went by and Abigail grew stronger, Kho tried to figure out his next move with the deli. The least he could do was remodel. The old space he inherited from Sky Park Deli was already worn out when he took it over in 2010, and there were barely any seats to accommodate the legions of fans that would choke up their doorway by noon.

"I was thinking about shutting it down and working on other concepts," he said. But it ultimately came down to financing and timing. They struggled to find someone willing to help, and when they did, the relationship didn't work out. Halfway through the remodel, they had to get another backer.

Looking back, he admits that 2012 was a trying and difficult year, but he learned a lot in the process. "By the grace of God and the good heart and belief of my current partner, we made it happen," said Kho. The deli finally reopened last October with exposed ducts, corrugated metal walls and, most important, more seats. Irvine got its best sandwich shop back, and now there were even burgers and fries on the menu.

Taking stock of where he is now, Kho remembers telling friends in high school that he

was going to open a deli such as this someday. It didn't happen right away. The 1998 graduate of Villa Park High School admits he was impulsive. "I was the 'yes' man. Want to take a road trip to pick up a friend at college? Sure!"

After high school and earning enough credits to transfer to Cal State Fullerton, he decided to take a sales job at a Honda dealer in Rancho Santa Margarita instead. The money was great for a 20-year-old. But it wasn't until he opened his deli that Kho found his purpose in life: "I was put on this earth to feed people."

Still, he remembers the opening day as intense. "It was just me and my parents at the deli at first," he says. "Neither of [them] had restaurant experience, so we were all just a bunch of noobs fumbling around. . . . I remember sending tickets back to my dad in chicken scratch. He would look at the ticket, look at me, look at the ingredients, and get red in the face."

But Kho persevered, and as word got out that there was this crazy-passionate young Korean dude making unbelievably great sandwiches with homemade mayo, he prospered. These days, he has gotten so busy taking care of the business end of things, he doesn't have a chance to do too much actual cooking.

"Once in a while, I'll help the guys out in the back by making some mayo," Kho says. "I'm actually contemplating hiring someone to run my business so I could just cook every day. I could spend all day in the kitchen without burning out."

Let's hope he does. No one wants to see Harry's Deli close ever again.



JOHN GILHOOLEY

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THE CURRY CHEF EVA MADRAY

BY ERIN DEWITT

START WITH A glass of Eva's Knock-out Punch, an exotic, sweet-tart blend of fruit juices, cinnamon, clove, ginger and a whole lot of rum, then work your way through a mouthwatering menu of enticing dishes straight from the Caribbean. This is Eva Madray's art—rich curries, jerk seasoning, fresh seafood—and it's what keeps her small, brightly colored gem of a restaurant a standout among culinary-rich Laguna Beach.

PEOPLE ISSUE

Born in Guyana, on the northeast coast of South America, Madray eventually settled in Southern California by way of the East Coast and Canada. (What does she love most about SoCal? "The people!" she exclaims without hesitation.) But all her culinary training came straight from her mother's kitchen. There, she learned generations-old recipes and the complexities of Indian, African and Dutch cuisines, including the art of making exceptional curries such as the one you'll find in the restaurant's best-selling dish, the Curry Snapper.

It wasn't always just Madray behind the wheel. In 1999, her dear friend Lester Lewis (who went by nickname Drew) invited her to buy one-third of his restaurant—and the prime-real-estate Laguna spot became Drew and Eva's Caribbean Kitchen. Soon after, Drew moved on and asked Eva to take over completely. "I had no idea what I was doing," she muses. Yet her natural talent for creating spicy, lush, satisfying dishes shone through any traces of inexperience. When she needed a temporary fix for the new title of the restaurant, Eva simply put a piece of duct tape over Drew's name on the eatery's sign. Customers, who had assumed the two were married, congratulated her upon seeing the handiwork. "They would say, 'Go, girl!'" she merrily recalls.

Now the space is surely all Eva's. "I cut all the meats, fish," she says. "I have to be here by myself. I have to put my soul into it." And that she does—Madray works 15-hour days, six days a week, and her dedication shows.

This year marks her 13th anniversary running the restaurant, but don't expect any big changes to the menu, only a few additions. "Customers get upset if I take a dish off," she says with a smile. Of the many who visit the cozy, 35-person-capacity, island-themed space, Madray estimates about 80 percent are locals, friendly faces she regularly sees around town.

So what makes Eva's Caribbean Kitchen such a divine culinary experience? An ancient Guyanese secret, she answers. "You can give anyone a recipe—but you have to put your heart and soul into it."



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JOHN GILHOOLEY

THE BEER (AND BRATS) BARON KENNY HOLLINGSHEAD

BY LP HASTINGS

“THANK YOU SO MUCH—have a great day, kids!” Kenny Hollingshead yells from across the counter of his inheritance, Hollingshead’s Delicatessen in Orange, as some regular customers leave. He has charmed generations of customers at his family’s legendary beer emporium, giving you nicknames depending on where you fall in social strata—“honey,” if you’re a lady; “kid,” if you’re younger than 40; “guy,” if you’re older. His voice fills the room like the sound of your dad finally coming home from work—comforting, constant, traits that have unfortunately been lacking in his life and business (which are indistinguishable from each other) in recent years.

PEOPLE ISSUE

Hollingshead’s mom died on Mother’s Day 2011, and his dad followed on Sept. 26, 2012, “so the baton’s in my hands now,” he says with an air of acceptance. “The future of Hollingshead’s is lying with myself and the family. It’s pretty exciting.”

His parents opened their first deli in 1963 off Katella Avenue; Kenny, an only child, joined the business while in his late 20s. Even though he attended college for many years away from home, he learned very quickly what actually mattered in life.

“What interests me is people and business and family,” he says. “That’s what keeps me going.”

And what the Hollingshead clan built was an institution, a place that sold craft beer years before every other hipster deemed himself a brewer, that served as a home for Packers fans and grilled fine bratwursts. Losing his parents was the biggest challenge he ever faced, even though the goodbye was the best anyone could’ve hope for. “My dad said, ‘Have one good cry, and then be done with it. Then have some beer and food,’ and that’s what we did,” Hollingshead remembers. He took a leave of absence for most of last year, but he is ready to face 2013 anew.

His strengths are rooted in the stories you know he has told many times, worn down and smoothed in all the right places. Hollingshead still cannot believe his parents worked full-time jobs to keep the store, and that Grandma Schulte moved all the way from Columbus, Ohio, with her recipes to lend an extra hand. “They were very self-sufficient and totally devoted to each other,” he says, stressing the importance with his blue eyes. “So that kind of devotion and sacrifice, for me, that’s what love is all about.”

He starts to razz his son, Michael, who’s bartending across the room—and who sends it right back at him.

“My dad encouraged me to not make friends with my customers,” the elder Hollingshead says, pausing. “It’s difficult for me to not do that because these people are supporting three generations of my family.” Most conversations with Hollingshead don’t end without some mention of how much he loves his son; his daughter, Melinda; or his wife, Charrion, with whom he’s still fascinated after 36 years of marriage. “I still can’t figure her out. . . . Doesn’t mean I love her any less,” he says with a laugh. “Whenever I think I kinda got her, I think I’ve got her figured out. . . . *naah*, I don’t got her figured out.”

Hollingshead plans to live until 100 “as long as I’m not a burden on my family. Although,” he pipes in, “we Lutherans feel that if there’s not beer and bratwurst in heaven, we’re not sure if we’re going.”

He laughs. “Just joking!”



JOHN GILHOOLEY

THE COWBOY FRANK J. FITZPATRICK

BY DAVE LIEBERMAN

SILVERADO CANYON is as far removed from the tanned, plastic cougars of Newport Beach as it's possible to get and still be within the limits of Orange County, and Frank J. Fitzpatrick, the owner of 5 Bar Beef, is the living embodiment of the place.

PEOPLE ISSUE

"As a boy, I wanted to be a cowboy," he says. "I just never grew out of it." Born and raised in the canyon, Frank went to Orange High School, where he participated in Future Farmers of America. He went to Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, then headed up to Idaho and Oregon during the summers to get some real-life experience.

Fitzpatrick is not some imagined relic from a Sam Peckinpah film, though; while he has the hat (and the cattle to back it up) and the truck, chews tobacco, and is a successful calf roper, he's also a prolific user of Facebook, wears those hipster five-toe shoes as often as boots, and is a health nut who's convinced that our love for white flour, sugar and processed crap is the reason we're obese. (Is he wrong?)

That's not all, either: Fitzpatrick is a yogi. After a horse fell on him and drove the saddle horn into his left leg—not exactly an injury we incur a lot down here in the flats—he took up Bikram yoga to regain his range of movement. It worked; watching him rope calves and clamber up and down into the bed of his pickup truck, you'd never guess the guy was turning 65 years old this year.

Eventually, after goofing off for a decade (by his own admission), he got into real estate, made some money and started buying cattle. He made his way around the West, raising cattle as far north as Oregon and as far east

as Winnemucca, Nevada, before returning to Orange County.

Now that Fitzpatrick is home, 5 Bar Beef has 400 head of cattle, split between a ranch in Hemet and his land in Silverado. All his cattle are grass fed from the time they're weaned—none of this fake "grass-finished" greenwashing. They're born in Hemet, then moved to Silverado before being sent off for slaughter. You can tell the difference, too; the meat is leaner and somehow beefier, almost bison-like. Ask how to cook it, and you'll get the official Frank Fitzpatrick sermon (it's even written on his business cards) about low and gentle heat, lest you turn the beef into jerky in a frying pan.

While much of his meat is sold to the trade—Esteban Nocito from the Barcelona On the Go luxe *lonchera* uses 5 Bar Beef for a "Local Burger" with OC Produce vegetables and a locally made bun—it's at local farmers' markets where Orange County gets to know Fitzpatrick. He's out every Friday at the Laguna Hills Farmers Market, every Saturday at the Irvine (UCI) Farmers Market and every Sunday at the Great Park Farmers Market, selling directly to the public. It's impossible to predict what he may have at any given market: steaks, ground meat, offal sausage. It's best to go in with an open mind and listen to his suggestions, then stay a while and chat with the most interesting cowboy in the county.

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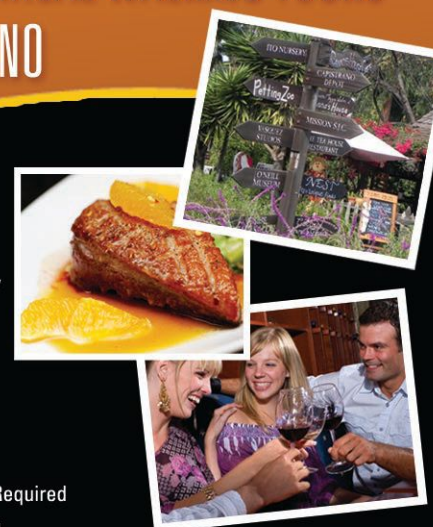
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JOHN GILHOOLEY

THE FILM GUY ERIK FORSSELL

BY MATT COKER

THE BACKGROUND IMAGE on the computer screen on Erik Forssell's desk in the Newport Beach Film Festival offices shows his then-very-pregnant wife, Claudia, smiling, an image that inspires him. Forssell needs plenty: Besides working for the festival, he puts in hours for the nonprofit Orange County Film Society, classes he teaches at Orange Coast College and on shoots as a filmmaker.

PEOPLE ISSUE

"My life is currently exhausting," he says, leaning back in his chair. "I don't know which ball I'm juggling to catch."

Born in Anaheim, raised in La Habra, and educated at Sonora High School and Fullerton and Orange Coast community colleges, Forssell began studying photography but dove into the "kick-ass" OCC film program after making prints "for hours and hours and hours" in the darkroom one day and stepping outside to catch some fresh air only to see film

students across the way having way more fun than he was. On one early shoot, after a director and his cameraman got into a fight, the helmer turned to the crew and asked, "Who wants to be a cameraman?" At 19, Forssell went from production assistant to director of photography on his first picture.

He left OCC with an AA, applied to and received rejection letters from various prestigious film schools, and finally landed at the Art Center of Design in

Pasadena. Though he worked as a movie shooter moonlighting as a Maytag repairman along the way, the road led back to OCC, where he now teaches basic film and cinematography classes. "I feel I'm in a groove as an instructor," says Forssell, who's confident the two-year college cranks out students ready to work in the film biz.

The school's faculty and students "are like family" to him, and he found another at the Newport Beach Film Festival, which he joined as a production assistant a dozen years ago. "It's funny; I remember when Gregg and Todd and a fax machine were all we had," Forssell says, referring to festival co-founders Gregg Schwenk (the CEO) and Todd Quartararo (the marketing director), as well as an office device no one uses anymore. For years, Forssell headed the programmers who make the final selections on which films are included in the festival lineup. With a baby on the way, he could not devote that much time, so a new role was carved out: special operations director. He's essentially charged with ensuring festival presentations go off smoothly, something he also does for

the Film Society, whose member screenings are shown around the county when the festival is dark.

Whether at school or on a set, he looks forward to "paying it forward" as instilled in him by László Kovács, the legendary Hungarian-born cinematographer whose films included *Easy Rider*, *Five Easy Pieces* and *Ghostbusters*. They met at the Palm Springs International Film Festival in 2001, "just hit it off" and kept in touch often over what would be the last six years of Kovács' life.

In 2009, Forssell introduced Newport festival audiences to *No Subtitles Necessary*, a documentary (with horrifying footage) about Kovács and Vilmos Zsigmond escaping the 1956 Soviet invasion of Hungary before both improbably rose to become top Hollywood cinematographers. There's an early scene in which "Happy Birthday" is sung to Kovács as he holds a phone receiver to his ear. Forssell was on the other end of the line.

Kovács did not offer industry advice much, but when he did, he included what's now Forssell's mantra: "I teach you something; you give that to someone else."

THE JERSEY GIRL ALICIA ROJAS

BY BRANDON FERGUSON

ALICIA ROJAS SPENT part of her youth in New Jersey, but she shares little in common with the Snookies and the Situations of the world. When she was 12, her family fled violence-plagued Colombia for the United States. Living in a predominantly white neighborhood in North Arlington, New Jersey, she had no choice but to grow up fast while her parents navigated an unfamiliar cultural landscape.

PEOPLE ISSUE

"I had a difficult experience adapting to American culture," says Rojas, a cherubic 36-year-old whose lush, jet-black curls congregate royally around her shoulders. But when she moved to Southern California, "I felt more at home. There were a lot more migrants, and I felt connected to the Latino community."

While overcoming childhood challenges explains the Santa Ana-based artist's current work as an advocate for Latino artists, her career was inspired by private trag-

edies, which led to an emotional breakdown in 2003. Rather than succumbing to the pain, she picked up a paintbrush and began expressing herself artistically. "I started showing in the [Santora Building's] Avantgarden [gallery], and I've been involved with the arts ever since," she says.

Her self-portraits, often done in vibrant color with acrylic paint, are exaggerated renderings displaying raw emotion—often intense sadness. In some, Rojas' face peers straight from the canvas, tears dripping from her eyes. One minimalist rendering, done in charcoal, just shows a face twisted by grief.

"It was therapy, a self-release," she says. "Acrylics were my best friend; they allowed me to paint all day."

Emerging from despair with new direction, Rojas saw the concerns of gallery owners in the historic Santora structure

who faced increasing rents as developers gentrified the downtown district. "In 2009, I started meeting people aligned with social causes who were artists," Rojas says. "We started talking about forming a group and getting representation with the city."

In early 2012, she went before the Santa Ana City Council armed with a mission statement and a vision for the city that would preserve the arts. Soon after, United Artists of Santa Ana was formed. Currently headed by Rojas, the group focuses on economic partnerships and professional development. "It has created a voice when we have issues with Downtown Inc. or the city," she explains. "Now, we have more of a collective voice, and I think that was really needed. I want to give opportunity to kids who were like me. Art changes your perspective and gives us hope."



JOHN GILHOOLEY

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THE CANDIDATE JESSE LA TOUR

BY JOEL BEERS

IN 2010, JESSE La Tour ran for Fullerton City Council. He didn't have a prayer. He refused donations. The photo he initially submitted to a local newspaper featured him in a ratty, one-size-too-small T-shirt that looked as though it came from babyGap. The image of him, shot at night, on his campaign sign was almost sinister-looking.

PEOPLE ISSUE

But if the election were held today, and downtown Fullerton had its own representative, he'd have no problems at the ballot box.

"If Jesse ran for office today and Fullerton [were] an eight-block radius, with Mulberry Street [restaurant] at the center, he'd be mayor," says Steven Baxter, a friend and collaborator.

As downtown Fullerton has grown and mutated during the past 10 years, 33-year-old La Tour has been one of its most influential residents. Through working with others artistically and politically, he has helped give this small sliver of Orange

County something that shockingly resembles an identity.

He started the Downtown Fullerton Art Walk, held on the first Friday of every month which celebrated its third anniversary March 1. He co-founded Hibbleton Gallery in 2008; it later moved to the Magoski Arts Colony on the outskirts of downtown, joining the Violethour and PAS in a three-gallery building. He helped to organize the first Saturday-morning protests outside the Fullerton Police Department in response to the death of Kelly Thomas. He's organized or inspired benefits, concerts and events of all stripes.

Basically, if there's a proactive, creative endeavor going on in downtown Fullerton, La Tour is involved somehow.

"It's a bit surreal when I think about it," says La Tour of his proudest accomplishment, the art walk. "To think about how we had nothing like this before, and how it's grown? I'm really proud of that."

A Fullerton resident since age 7, La Tour is many things: writer, artist, musician, college English professor, videographer, art-gallery owner, local historian, activist. But his real talent may lie in the quiet, unassuming way that, through collaborating with others, he gets shit done.

His central role in helping foster, in Baxter's words, an "asshole-free downtown Fullerton of artists, musicians, activists and educators" would have shocked those who knew La Tour a decade ago. At the time, he was a "painfully shy" dude taking classes at Fullerton College and just "trying to figure himself out," he says. "I was the kind of person who would just be quiet, listen and observe and chime in from time to time."

In 2004, he moved downtown and into an apartment atop Mulberry Street Restaurant. Members of the Cold War Kids would hang out there, and coupled with "all these creative, artistic types I kept meeting," he turned the apartment

into a hub for a small but real arts scene. "I think that's where it really started, and everything has just kind of evolved from that," La Tour says.

Working with fellow artists, as well as gaining a deep interest in local issues, helped draw La Tour from his insularity and into his role as downtown's unofficial mayor of the arts. And unlike so many creative types who can't wait to split somewhere else, La Tour's quite comfortable in Fullerton.

Shortly after opening Hibbleton, he bought an Amtrak pass and rode the rails across America for a month. It was an eye-opening experience, showing him "America's beauty and its problems," he says.

When he returned to Fullerton's station, he hopped off the train and started walking to his apartment.

"Then one of those existential moments came, an epiphany," he says. "I think for the first time, I really realized this is where my roots are. This was my home."

So get used to it, Fullerton: Jesse La Tour isn't leaving any time soon.

For more La Tour, check out his writings at www.jesselatour.blogspot.com and his videos at www.youtube.com/user/jesselatour.

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JOHN GILHOOLEY

THE LADY OF THE HOUSE APRIL SKINNER

BY PATRICE MARSTERS

I F YOU'VE BEEN to Stages Theatre in the past decade, you've met "Ma." She hands you your seat assignments, reminds you of the concessions, asks you to remember to turn off your cell phone, and hey, did you know there's a fund-raiser going on right now for new lights? She gently chides you for being late, then shows you where your seat is.

PEOPLE ISSUE

If you've been to the storefront theater in Fullerton more than once, she already knows your name.

As the house manager, April Skinner is a passionate whirlwind. And she couldn't imagine life any other way. Without her, "[Stages] wouldn't have the same feel, the same atmosphere," she says. "I bring my own uniqueness to it."

Skinner, 58, has lived in Southern California her whole life. And she's done many jobs in that lifetime, including serv-

ing as a rape-crisis counselor and running the computer library at a Fullerton elementary school. Her most important jobs, she'll tell you, though, are these: wife, mother, grandmother. Oh, and house manager.

But it's being a mother that got her that last job. Her son Michael, then still in high school, was running tech for a play at the theater, and Skinner would attend performances on nights he was working. "I was the obsessive mom who

has to be a part of everything," Skinner says with her signature laugh. "I became a person who was seen: 'Hey, here's this lady who has been to every performance. How about we train you to be house manager?'"

Amanda DeMaio, the theater's executive director, recalls, "One day, she looked at us and said she wanted to house manage even more. I believe her words were 'Forever. I'll just do it.'"

Skinner treats the house as *her* house, ensuring everything is in place for not only visitors, but also the Stages family. She handles the ticketing and the day-to-day operations. Supplies are stocked, rooms cleaned, bills paid. "She's been instrumental in getting the theater organized as a business," DeMaio says, "and runs, as they say, a pretty tight ship in the office."

And theater-goers are honored guests to Skinner's home. "She really approaches the theater as an extension of her living room," DeMaio says. "She invites you in for a few hours and hopes you had a good time."

"I'm always there," Skinner says,

laughing. "I build a relationship with our patrons. . . . I want everyone to feel good and feel warm. I treat all the people like my children."

"She loves talking to patrons and getting to know them," DeMaio adds. "She's excited when she makes that connection."

The connection is so strong that Stages is the one thing safe from Skinner's self-imposed layoffs. She's stepping back from a 12-year run at the elementary school and has already left the 15-year counseling gig. "I don't do *anything* for short periods of time," she says. "I'm a long-timer." Her younger son, Martin, is moving back to OC in September, after being gone with the Navy. With him will be his wife and two children, and Skinner is looking forward to being a "full-time grandma."

But she isn't considering leaving the theater: "[The theater] is my passion," she says. "It feeds my soul. . . . I can't think of not being there."

Neither can DeMaio. "On any given night, there's a one-woman show going on in that lobby," she says, "and there's nothing that gets in her way!"

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BY JON TREMBLAY

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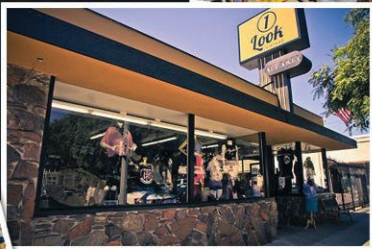
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ITALIAN LEGENDARY PROTECTION

BY NICK SCHOU

BY NICK SCHOU

The logo, he says, speaks to the irony of a coastal Southern California town wedged between Newport Beach—one of the nation's richest, most-Republican yachting enclaves—and Santa Ana, the barrio-heavy city of mostly Mexican immigrants. "The anchor being upside down is a salute to the fact that most of the core people in skateboarding don't live on the beach because they can't afford it," Klein explains. "It's a symbol of distress."

It's also possible the black-and-white-checked pattern on the company's skating decks is a tribute to the first pair of checkered Vans that Klein purchased in San Francisco in the early 1980s, before he immigrated to the U.S. from his native Germany. There, by dint of high-school camaraderie, he became an honorary American: His hometown of Frankfurt happened to be home to the country's largest American airbase, and several of his best school friends were Yanks. They shared his early passion for skateboarding.

—| PEOPLE ISSUE |—

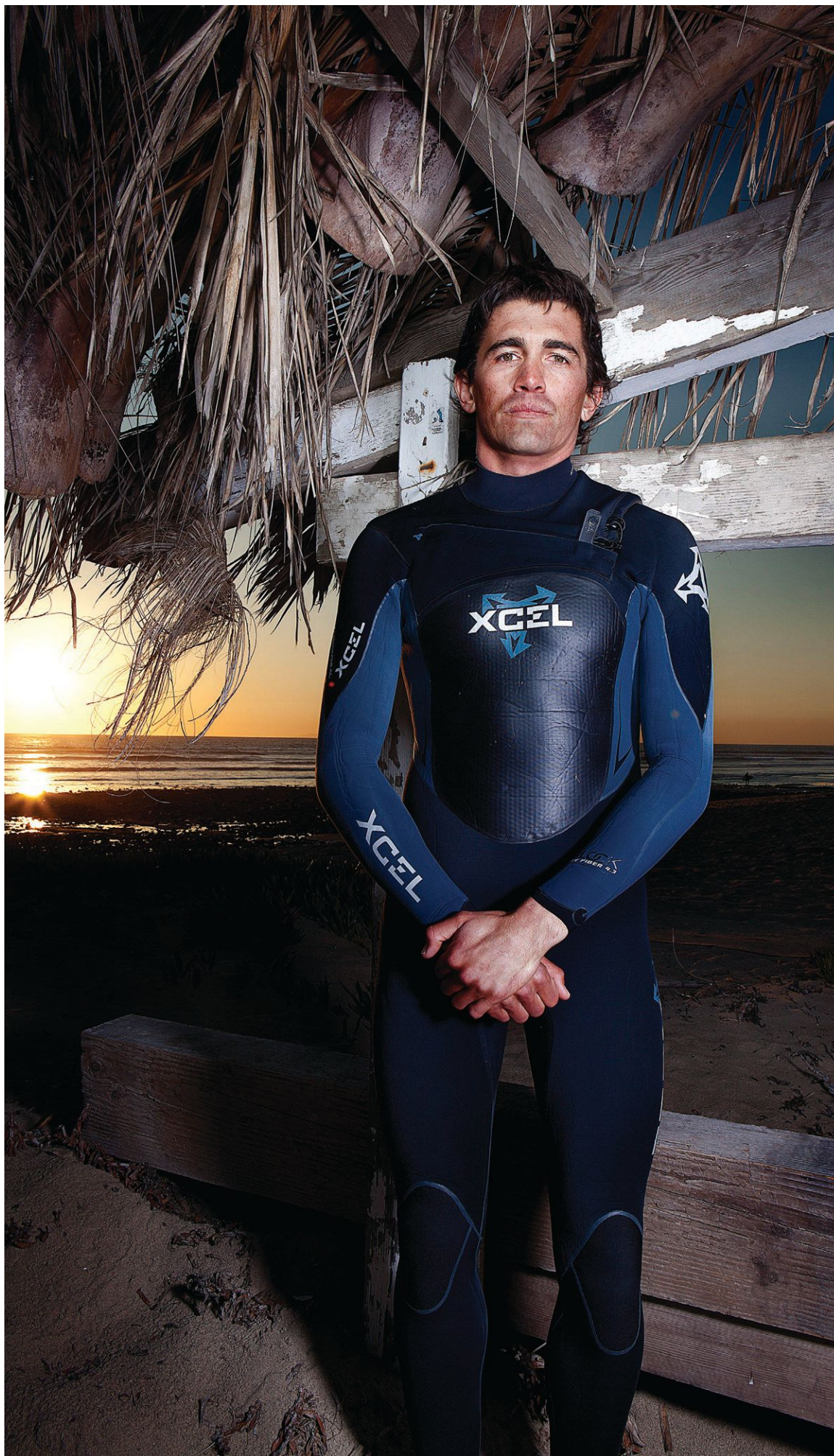
After first visiting California at age 16, Klein came back for college, earning a degree from the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena before working as a music producer and creative director, later founding a series of skateboard and other action-sports-related companies, as well as providing design services for his friends. After sojourns in New York, he settled permanently in Southern California, specifically Costa Mesa. Klein married and raised a daughter, and he now spends every free, non-working moment surfing, snowboarding, stand-up paddling or skating around town.

Klein's keep-it-small, keep-it-local philosophy means Costa Misery produces only 30 or 40 sweat shirts or hoodies at a time, and then it moves on to something else. The objective, he says, is to never be on the big racks in chain stores, so the only retail outlet where you'll find the company's clothing is at Attic Skate Shop in Costa Mesa and Laguna Beach's Handplant. His biggest goal for the company is building its own skate team and promoting the Costa Mesa lifestyle worldwide.

"Ninety-nine percent of the world's population hasn't heard of Costa Mesa," he says. "Everybody loves to hate on Costa Mesa. All the other cities with beachfront property call it Costa Misery, but now it's come full circle. Nowadays, people carry it as a badge of honor."



JOHN GILHOOLEY



JOHN GILHOOLEY

MR. BIG WAVE GREG LONG

BY NICK SCHOU

SAN CLEMENTE BIG-WAVE rider Greg Long only really began to worry when the second towering wall of water crashed over his head just as he was about to reach the surface.

PEOPLE ISSUE

It was Dec. 21, 2012, and Long and several other big-wave surfers were riding giants at Cortes Bank, about 100 miles off the coast of San Diego. Just moments earlier, Long had wiped out on a 25-foot wave and, as often happens, had been thrust as many feet below the surface as the monster swell continued on its way east. He'd had the wind knocked out of him and felt pretty bruised up from the impact of the wipeout, but that was nothing unusual.

What was unusual, though, was that Long's inflatable wet suit had failed to deploy, which made it nearly impossible for him to reach the turbulent surface and get rescued by a Jet Ski. Just when he'd almost made it, he had been sent straight back to the darkness. "I knew I was in pretty grave danger," Long recalls. "I had to relax and control my mind."

His top concern was keeping himself from swallowing water, but Long's brain was telling him to breathe. He could feel his stomach fluttering with involuntary spasms as his lungs began to shut down. "When the turbulence finally started to subside, I was swimming to the surface, and the third wave passed over me, at which point, I knew I was going to black out soon."

Arms flailing, his fingers grasped his leash, and at length, Long managed to pull himself up again, battling against the washing-machine-like turbulence. "Either I was going to get up to the surface," he figured, "or black out 30 feet underwater."

Instead, Long blacked out only a few feet underwater, right before a fourth wave

crashed on top of him. As soon as it passed, arriving at the scene was a Jet Ski steered by his close friends D.K. Walsh and John Walla, another San Clemente surfer who'd helped Long pioneer the recent trend of paddle-in big-wave riding. Long was face-down in the water, but as soon as they pulled him aboard, he came back to life, vomiting a mixture of blood and foam. Within an hour or so, the Coast Guard had choppered Long to a hospital, where he underwent treatment for secondary drowning, and he began to consider whether what had just happened was life's way of telling him his surfing days were over.

"That was the heaviest moment of my life," he says. "Since then, it has become one of the most amazing experiences of my life, but at the moment, it was terrifying, knowing how close I'd come to drowning."

Ultimately, Long realized he wasn't going to let fear stop him from dominating the sport. Although he says he still relives the experience every time he takes a wave, he's already back in the big competitions and recently pulled a third-place finish in the infamously dangerous Maverick's Invitational near San Francisco. On the horizon: paddling into some of the world's largest waves at Jaws, on Maui's north shore.

"Big-wave surfing has been my No. 1 passion and guiding light in life," Long says. "It's been the most beautiful, adventurous life I could ever dream of living. But how quick and easily it can be taken away from you. The next wave you ride could be the best of your life—or the one that ends it."

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THE HYPNOTIC NOVELIST ALICIA KOZAMEH

BY GABRIEL SAN ROMÁN

FOR ALICIA KOZAMEH—a former Argentine political prisoner, Chapman University creative writing teacher, and author of seven Spanish-language novels—the written word is a reflection of life. As a student of philosophy and literature at the Universidad Nacional de Rosario in Argentina in 1975, her scholarly life was interrupted by the political turmoil engulfing that nation just months before a rapaciously violent military dictatorship seized power.

PEOPLE ISSUE

Because Kozameh was an outspoken activist, the new government detained her in the infamous basement of Rosario's police headquarters; she spent the next three years at the Villa Devoto prison in Buenos Aires, the author recalls during a lunchtime conversation at the Filling Station, an eatery near Chapman.

"I went back a few years ago to Villa Devoto," Kozameh recounts of her first time there after fleeing into exile. "It was draining. It was really hard. I went back to my cell and the basement. What I felt was so intense; to me, it's easier to describe in writing." That's exactly what she did with her first published novel, *Steps Under Water*, a fictionalized account of her prison experience.

Kozameh is as revolutionary in her approach to literature as she is in her political worldview. In *259 Leaps, the Last Immortal*, a novel without chapters, she threads through an exiled life with a poetically fragmented narrative of meditative "leaps." Much of Kozameh's body of work is overtly political. *Ostrich Legs*, her latest novel to be translated into English this year by Wings Press, is, on the surface, a story about two siblings, one who is physically and mentally disabled; as with much of Kozameh's literature, fiction intersects with memoir.

"When my sister died, I didn't have time to really think about it and be convinced of her death because I was an activist, a student, always rushing, active," Kozameh says. "Then I was arrested, spent years in prison and went into exile. My attention got completely absorbed by

everyday life, but when my daughter was born, it was like I had, once again, this girl who needed help with everything, who needed to be fed. All of a sudden, it felt like my sister was back."

Feeling the need to come to terms with her older sibling's death and allay fears of raising her daughter in an overprotective manner, Kozameh attempted to write about her concerns, but she found herself imprisoned again, this time emotionally. She turned to a therapist in Buenos Aires for hypnosis. "I was remembering new things. I was becoming a little girl again," the 59-year-old recounts, periodically stroking the auburn curls of her hair. "I realized the effect of the hypnosis sessions on my writing could become a technique."

From the first pages of *Ostrich Legs*, the narrative reads like an excavation of memory. "I must be seeing her, that thick straight hair, that darkness. 'Mommy, hungry,' she must be saying," Kozameh writes on the first page of the book visualizing the past and re-creating the image of her sister.

Through the chapters, the relationship between young Alcira and the older, disabled Mariana is chronicled. But as Chapman students lucky enough to apprentice under a master such as Kozameh should note, larger themes of society are never far from her heart. "*Ostrich Legs* reflects the abuse of power in the environment of a South American family," she says, "and it's also a metaphor for impunity in a country under a brutal dictatorship—and in a world where justice is still a dream."



JOHN GILHOOLEY

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JOHN GILHOOLEY

THE PUNK AMBASSADOR STEVE SOTO

BY NATE JACKSON

DOWNTOWN FULLERTON looks a lot different than it did when Steve Soto was 21. For starters, most of what he's surveying from his seat on the new, wooden patio area of Hopscotch—the new eatery/craft-whiskey joint in town—didn't exist: the bars, the restaurants, none of it.

PEOPLE ISSUE

"It's probably better that way," Soto says before biting into a plain chicken sandwich with mustard on the side. "Me and Tony would've been a lot of trouble."

The "Tony" he's referring to is Tony Cadena, co-founder of OC punk legends the Adolescents, who, alongside Soto, single-handedly shaped the course of three generations of loud, irreverent musicians to come. With a slash-and-burn guitar tone matched only by tales of his wild, booze-soaked escapades offstage before sobriety set in, Soto's reputation for living and breathing punk rock always precedes him. Usually because you can't talk about the genre's history in Southern California without mentioning his name and several of his bands who are instant Mosh Pit Hall of Famers. Take your pick: Agent Orange, Joyride, Manic Hispanic and many more.

And, lest we forget, there was his time spent in the '90s booking bands at the world-famous, now-extinct Linda's Doll Hut in Anaheim, back when the place was a hub for literally every band he could book, whether it was the Offspring or a no-name band from out of town. At the legendary hangout, mayhem miracles or mishaps were bound to happen—all in a place the size of a dorm room.

"When Bad Religion said they'd do it, their crew weren't from around here, and as soon as they walked in, I could see it on their face, and one of 'em gets on the phone and says, 'You guys know what we're getting into?' And those guys are all my friends, so they just said, 'Set the gear up; we'll be there. Before we could hire guys like you, we played places like this all the time.'"

Over the past few decades, his own work with everyone from the Agent Orange to CJ Ramone continues to make him a globetrotting ambassador of OC punk. When he's not at his home in Long Beach, it means he's probably in the studio or on a plane to play in another part of the world.

"It's amazing standing in a festival in Croatia and thinking, 'God, we started out playing punk rock in a garage. And we're still playing it,'" Soto says.

Judging from his current output with the Adolescents, the Cadillac Tramps (celebrating their 20th anniversary this year), and Steve Soto and the Twisted Hearts, it doesn't appear he'll be stopping any time soon.

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Mr. Provinziano is an experienced trial attorney. He has handled approximately 40 combines jury and court trials to verdict and has prepared countless more that were settled on the courthouse steps. In addition to jury trials, Mr. Provinziano has handled well over 200 preliminary hearings and law and motion evidentiary hearings. Over the past nine years, Mr. Provinziano has been in court nearly every day handling cases and advocating vigorously for his clients. Mr. Provinziano has handled, in his career, approximately 1500 criminal cases & 300 divorce and family law cases. Mr. Provinziano prides himself on providing excellent, detail-oriented service to his clients. If a person finds themselves facing a criminal, family, or civil crisis in their life, Mr. Provinziano is a strong advocate for his client's side and will put in the countless hours to advocate zealously and obtain a successful outcome. According to Mr. Provinziano, "I aim to provide clients with the best service and representation at the most difficult times in their life."

Mr. Provinziano is a Former Deputy District Attorney for the County of San Bernardino. During law school, Mr. Provinziano also worked as a law clerk for the Riverside County District Attorney's Office. Given these experiences, Mr. Provinziano has the inside perspective on law enforcement and the court system in both counties and can use this knowledge to help obtain a positive resolution to criminal cases.

Mr. Provinziano is a graduate of impressive schools. Mr. Provinziano attended UC Hastings College of the Law in San Francisco, California and received a Juris Doctor degree from that institution. Mr. Provinziano also received other honors, including an award for the highest grade in the Advanced Trial Advocacy course and a Certificate for the Civil Litigation Concentration. UC Hastings has repeatedly ranked among the top 100 schools in U.S. News & World Report. It is the oldest law school in California.

Mr. Provinziano received a Bachelor's degree with a double-major in Rhetoric and English Literature from UC Berkeley. He received the honor of giving the commencement address for the Rhetoric Department graduation ceremony. He also graduated with the Honors in Rhetoric and the honor of Distinction in General Scholarship. UC Berkeley has consistently ranked as the top public university in the United States of America and it is considered as one of the premier Universities in the entire world.

Mr. Provinziano employs aggressive tactics and strategies in order to advocate for his clients. Mr. Provinziano intends to pursue every possible avenue for his clients to get a good outcome for their case. He prides himself on providing excellent service to his clients. If you retain Mr. Provinziano and you are his client, you will be in good hands during a difficult time and you will be treated with respect and courtesy.

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THE BLACK-HOLE SON BILL EVANS

TAYLOR HAMBY

BILL EVANS didn't even have a band when Darby Crash of the Germs asked him to open for them at the seminal punk venue the Masque in Hollywood for Thanksgiving weekend 1977. Not about to pass up a golden opportunity, Evans lied and said, "No problem." He scrambled to get a band ready to play the hot-ticket punk show: Most of his friends from Fullerton High School were in hippie bands or, in the case of future OC punk icon Rikk Agnew, a KISS cover band. A few of his long-haired friends blindly agreed, and after a few haircuts and a trip to a hardware store for barbed wire to wear during their set, Naughty Women were born.

PEOPLE ISSUE

They certainly made an impression on the Masque: They got kicked out and banned because they trashed the place and broke equipment. They didn't even get to see the Germs' performance, but the night became just one of many incredible stories Evans was able to pocket from his youth and now retell as owner of Black Hole Records in downtown Fullerton. Go into the vinyl and music-memorabilia shop, plop down any record, and Evans will have a little-known fact or anecdote about that band—many of which will be first-hand retellings.

The bespectacled Andy Warhol-lookalike has a rapidfire story-telling style, and although it has been decades, when sharing stories, he's as bright-eyed as if they happened yesterday. When Izzy Stradlin (future guitarist of Guns N' Roses) was a kid, new to Southern California from Indiana, he met Evans and joined Naughty Women as a drummer. The pair sold air-conditioning units door to door and eventually had a falling out after Stradlin made an inappropriate move on Evans' girlfriend.

Fellow Fullertonian Mike Ness of Social Distortion roadied for Naughty Women when he was a teen. Ness was a tough kid who lived for trouble and had a fondness for starting fights, Evans says, and the young punk would go up to kids congregating in front of liquor stores and spit, "Get

out of the way, you fucking faggots." The group of jocks, hippies or loadies wouldn't really know how to respond because no one really acted like that, let alone a scrawny kid such as Ness.

A group of hippies followed the guys to a party at an apartment by the Brea Mall after one incident. Ness, in an arm cast and clutching a baseball bat, exited the car and approached the trio of pissed-off hippies. "Mike . . . goes up to the hippie and hits him right in the knee cap and shatters his knee," Evans recalls. "Dropped him like a sack of flour."

He then goes on to explain how Gordon Cox of the Detours made a spiked bracelet from track cleats, and as the second guy came up to them, Cox knocked him in the face with it, giving him a bloody facial piercing. The hippies finally retreated, and as they backed out, Ness threw the baseball bat at the car for good measure.

Another time, he saw Ness get Van Gogh-ed when a gutter punk bit off his earlobe during a fight at a studio party. Evans suggested a trip to the emergency room, but "he was like, 'I don't got coin for stitches; just get me a fucking beer.' I should've kept it for eBay and sold it," Evans says.

We could fill this whole issue with Evans' stories, but until he decides to write a book, pop in to Black Hole and treat yourself to a vinyl or two alongside a huge helping of music history.



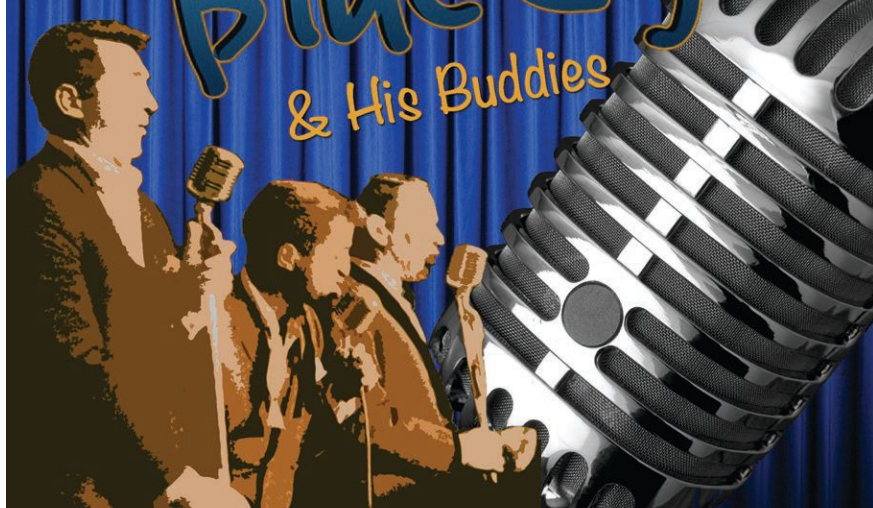
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JOHN GILHOOLEY

THE BARTENDER ALEX HERNANDEZ

BY TAYLOR HAMBY

As the owner of Long Beach's Alex's Bar, Alex Hernandez has a pretty set routine: wake up, check emails from bands around the world, try to squeeze in some gym time, then walk or bike to work at 2 p.m. Given the nature of the bar business, though, each day at the office holds a new surprise.

PEOPLE ISSUE

Just when you think you've seen it all, he says, customers are there to prove you wrong. He sees patrons at their booze-fueled best and their drunken worst. "Mopping up puke doesn't even make me gag anymore," Hernandez says. "I've been doing it for 13 years now—I could practically be a nurse by now." Embarrassed customers, fear not—Hernandez won't dish on the specifics of your antics (to the press, anyway).

People flock to Alex's Bar for a variety of reasons: to catch a show featuring nationally touring and local bands, grab a stiff drink, or catch a glimpse of the filming location of *True Blood*'s Fangtasia. The velvet paintings, red-curtained stage, and black-and-white photo booth have all become iconic since the punk-rock bar opened.

Since December, however, the campy décor has been fading from the walls steadily;

it's the bar's first renovation, and the customers have noticed. "They're scared we're going to screw it up and take the dank out of the dive," Hernandez says.

New patent-leather barstools, the removal of a dilapidated ceiling cabinet, and the shift in focus to craft beer and cocktails are all cause for alarm from the regulars, but Hernandez assures them, "We're just giving the bar a little face-lift, not a boob job and Botox and all that other nasty stuff."

He understands people don't like change, but frankly, a good portion of the bar was falling apart thanks to the wild nights that transpire at a punk-rock joint. "The bar was never completed when we started," he explains. "A lot of the stuff was made with the cheapest material I could find just to get the doors open."

When the place opened, he was 27 years old, and now he's 40 and married with two sons. His tastes have changed, and Hernandez is just reflecting that with the revamp. The quality of shows booked will remain, and the quality of drinks will increase. His goal for 2013 is to get rid of the soda gun completely. And

skeptics may find comfort in his investing in a brand-new sound system.

When it comes to running the business, it's a family affair. Hernandez's mom and cousin do the bookkeeping. His wife, Paige, began as a regular and eventually won his heart after many slow Sunday games of pool after her shift at the Cheese-cake Factory. She now runs the social media, handles ticketing, makes fliers for bands "who don't have their shit together enough to make their own," and even tends bar a few days a week. "She's the brains behind the man," Hernandez says.

On his one day off a week, Hernandez enjoys hanging with his sons, Diego and Grayson, usually at Disneyland. He says it's too early to wonder if they will one day join the family business. "I wouldn't pressure them to join the glamorous life of a bartender," he jokes.

Six days a week, Hernandez's self-described glamorous life ends at 3 a.m., after closing and cleaning the bar, then walking or biking to his Long Beach home, watching about an hour of Cartoon Network, and dozing off until the crack of noon to do it all again.



JOHN GILHOOLEY

THE VINYL PROPHET RAND FOSTER

BY BRANDON FERGUSON

WHEN DIGITAL SHARING BEGAN overtaking the music industry in the early 2000s, employees of the independent Long Beach music store Fingerprints approached owner Rand Foster about doing away with vinyl altogether. Foster immediately nixed the idea. “I said, ‘But then we can’t say we’re a record store,’” he recalls.

PEOPLE ISSUE

A decade later, it’s clear Fingerprints is anything but your average CD store. A visit to the new, 10,000-square-foot location on Fourth Street, just east of downtown (it moved from its original spot on Second Street in Belmont Shore in 2011), can at first seem overwhelming. Assorted music junkies browse through stacks of merchandise near towering, exposed brick walls bearing silk-screened prints autographed by the bands who have played in the store. The selection is vast, with sounds for every taste: from Jimi Hendrix and Sun Ra to local indie bands such as Two Gallants and the Littlest Viking.

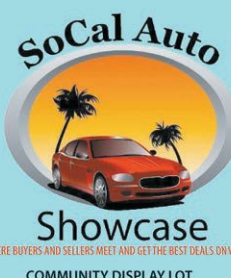
When Foster opened Fingerprints in 1991, he left a well-paying job in the amusement-park industry. It allowed him to telecommute, but he found working from home too dull. “My wife said, ‘You need to get a job,’ and I was like, ‘I’m going to work in a record store,’” the 46-year-old father of two says.

“If I’d been smarter, I’d have recognized sooner that I spent all my time in record stores,” he adds, laughing.

Though the digital revolution witnessed the downfall of giants such as Tower Records, Virgin Megastores and Warehouse Music, all of which disappeared as though mammoths run off a cliff, Foster persevered by selling a seemingly obsolete musical medium that seems to be experiencing a new run on life: vinyl records. Also distinguishing Fingerprints from an ever-diminishing herd of independent music retailers are the impressive names Foster brings in for live, in-store appearances. So far this year, Fingerprints has hosted the likes of Yo La Tengo; Richard Sherman, the Disney composer of *Mary Poppins* and *Jungle Book* fame; and Matt Costa. Other recent guests include Beach Boy Al Jardine and the Foo Fighters.

Though the brick walls could probably tell some stories, Foster says most musicians respect the sanctity of the record store. “There’s been no real debauchery,” he says, laughing. “The worst we ever had was an artist who got ferociously drunk and got a little abusive.”

Asked whether he believes his store will continue to thrive as the digital onslaught continues, Foster says he remains hopeful. “I feel like the vibe in the music-collecting community—those who want a tangible item vs. people who have to have something this second—I think that divide will continue,” Foster says. “Historically, we’ve identified ourselves with our things.”



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THE KICKSTARTER JON O'BRIEN

BY NATE JACKSON

MOST PRODUCERS CAN only hope to grind and stumble their way to the next level of their careers. In Jon O'Brien's case, the next level had to be built, literally. Last August, the Irvine producer put up thousands of dollars of his own cash and initiated a Kickstarter campaign, hoping to construct the studio of his dreams. Three months later, he sits in his hand-built, 1,000-square-foot Tustin studio, surrounded by a flotsam of vintage amps, guitars and a schedule full of bands.

PEOPLE ISSUE

"Every day I walk into the studio, I feel so proud and blessed to have so many people who've helped me out," O'Brien says. "I feel like I haven't let those people down who did support me, and I'm gonna keep it going."

Up until that point, the better part of O'Brien's impressive local recording résumé was forged in his bedroom of his family's home and included some friends who would become some of the biggest names in OC's burgeoning indie scene. O'Brien's simple, woodsy aesthetic behind the boards has become the

standard for sharp, soulful, radio-ready Americana, as evidenced by his turns on Young the Giant's first EP (as the Jakes), as well as records by Yellow Red Sparks and Nichole Vaughn and Her Lovely Band.

You could say O'Brien's methods as a producer stemmed from his own experience as a singer/songwriter and guitar player. Flying to Kansas for a week to record as a solo artist with legendary producer Ed Rose, the axe man who calls himself a devoted fan of Ryan Adams and Limbeck prides himself on connecting with bands on a personal level before stepping in the studio with them.

"I do turn down some bands, but for the right reasons," O'Brien says. "A band typically records once a year; they save their pennies and put out an EP, maybe save up \$3,000, and if they're gonna be dedicated to doing that, I need to know in my heart that I do think I'm the guy for the project. I can't take their money. I think that standard is what allows my work to be a good product."

As bands such as Young the Giant continue to gain traction on the world stage, interest in O'Brien's work is growing to the point at which his new studio isn't just a next step—it's a necessity. But despite his busy schedule, he remains committed to keeping his ears open to the live music scene, usually roaming the crowd in his beat-up Emerson ball cap—his college alma mater—looking for the next great local band to capture on tape. "It doesn't have to be the best band in the world," he says. "But if I meet up with them and connect with that person, even if it's one line in one song, I know what to do with the rest of their songs."



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LAGUNA'S TROUBADOUR

WARREN ALLEN

BY NICK SCHOU

I F YOU'VE EVER strolled through downtown Laguna Beach between 6:30 and 8 on a Thursday or Saturday night and heard the softly amplified strains of "Strawberry Fields Forever" echoing down the lane, then you can thank Warren Allen for keeping the town's hippie vibe alive.

PEOPLE ISSUE

Allen arrived here from a far-away place: Bennington, Vermont. After graduating from nearby St. Michael's College in 1971, he headed west to San Francisco, looking for whatever was left over from the Summer of Love, only to find it long gone. He didn't regret the trip, though. "I got a taste of the West Coast that stayed in the back of my mind forever," Allen explains. After a few more years in Bennington, he happened upon a book with an intriguing title, *In Search of the Miraculous* by P.D. Ouspensky, a pupil of the Armenian esoteric George Gurdjieff, whose teachings posit that humans live in a state of waking sleep and that only his method, based on ancient religious knowledge, can awaken them.

Inspired by the writings, Allen spent most of the mid-1970s in Europe and the Middle East, then half a year in Tehran, Iran, teaching English at an international school and studying, among other things, Sufism. "That was an eye-opening experience," says Allen. "A big part of my ambition was to crack out of my insular upbringing in Bennington."

In 1989, a budding career as a computer programmer brought Allen to Irvine and Toshiba, where he met Jim Rohrer, who worked in the cubicle to his right. Years later, the soft-spoken computer programmer and his fellow strummer Rohrer began playing open-mic nights at Santa Ana's Gypsy Den. After two years, they graduated to playing sets at various Borders cafés before the bookstore chain shut down, leaving the duo with nowhere to go but the streets.

"It dawned on us it would be fun to try Disneyland or someplace, but we finally hit on Laguna Beach," Allen recalls. "We'd seen people busking there before. We started in early 2010, sitting on a bench on the beach and playing in an alcove next to the Fingerhut Gallery until [the staff] couldn't stand it anymore and called the cops. We play all sorts of stuff, but a signature set of tunes for us starts with 'Strawberry Fields Forever' and winds up with 'Lucy In the Sky With Diamonds.' Those are difficult but very satisfying songs to play."

Allen's interest in Laguna Beach was amplified by his discovery of its outlaw past when he read a book by yours truly, *Orange Sunshine: How the Brotherhood of Eternal Love Spread Peace, Love and Acid to the World*, about a group of hippies and surfers who lured Timothy Leary to Southern California, ate lots of acid and smuggled hash from Afghanistan. He was so interested, in fact, that he set up a secret Facebook group, open only to former members and associates of the Brotherhood, called the Church of the Sleeping Angel, which is what they almost called themselves. Allen also tried his hand at editing the Brotherhood's

Wikipedia page, but because he based his updates on conversations with actual members of the group, the website's self-appointed administrators locked the entry and banned Allen from the page.

Allen and Rohrer now usually play at the corner of For-

est Avenue and PCH, the epicenter of Laguna's street scene. But because they have small amplifiers, they remain outlaws who always have to stay one step ahead of the code enforcers. "We've always been technically illegal," Allen says, with only a trace of mischievous pride.



JOHN GILHOOLEY

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page 82
SUNDAY

GREEN DAY!
GREEN DAY!
GREEN DAY!

page 82
TUESDAY

A VERY QUEENLY
MEETING ON THE OCEAN

page 83
WEDNESDAY

TWO DUTCH BROTHERS
KEEP YOU UP ALL NIGHT

page 83
THURSDAY
ENOUGH MSG TO KILL
AN ELEPHANT

fri/03/08

[THEATER]

Main Course

Life X 3

Dinner parties are the worst. You're forced to make small talk with people you barely know or like while pretending to act interested despite your complete and utter lack of interest in anything outside your own discontent. In *Life X 3*, playwright Yasmina Reza illustrates this familiar, uncomfortable scene for audiences, all the while highlighting the difficulties not only of the social situation, but also of the inward torment faced by couples who can barely stand each other. Alcohol flows, insults fly and uneasiness sets in during director Gary Krinke's depiction of this deliciously disastrous dinner party at STAGES theatre.

Life X 3 at STAGES theatre, 400 E. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton, (714) 525-4484; www.stagesoc.com. 8 p.m. Through April 7. \$18-\$20.

—AMANDA PARSONS

[CONCERT]

Cute Couple

Matt & Kim

When describing Matt & Kim's music, the word "precious" comes to mind. But who decides whether being precious is a bad thing? We'd argue that in the case of this Brooklyn-based duo, it's quite the opposite. Yes, Matt Johnson and Kim Schifino are a real-life couple, and their emo-flavored music, with its old-timey organ accompaniments, is at times reminiscent of the *Napoleon Dynamite* soundtrack. But the vibe makes for a light-hearted, whimsical, uplifting listening experience. Dig the song "Light Speed," which features Johnson's optimistic warble accompanied only by organ and handclaps as he describes his worldview of the universe from the lonely grass in centerfield mid-ballgame.

Matt & Kim with Papa at the Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, (714) 957-0600; www.observatoryoc.com. 8 p.m. \$25. —BRANDON FERGUSON

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sat/03/09

[FILM]

Moving Pictures

Girl Rising

Activist Grace Paley observed both economically and poetically that "the only recognizable feature of hope is action." In this new documentary about successful struggles for education and autonomy by nine young women from nine of the most oppressive places in the world you never want to be born into, seeing is indeed better than just believing. With renewed attacks by religious patriarchs, anti-science goofs, and all stripes of right-wing misogynists—from Rush to the GOP, from the pope to Pakistan, where girls and women are actually shot—*Girl Rising* responds with autobiographical profiles of brave females in Haiti, Ethiopia, Cambodia and more. It's a moving and politically potent chorus of first-person retorts in word and deed to the women-haters, presented by our local National Organization for Women chapter. Watching is the least we can do, and hopefully, it's a step toward actually doing.

OC Now presents *Girl Rising* at Westpark 8 Theater, 3755 Alton Pkwy., Irvine, (949) 622-8609; www.gathr.us/screening/reserve/1142. 1 p.m. \$10. —ANDREW TONKOVICH

[AWARDS]



Drumroll, Please

OC MUSIC AWARDS

It's all been leading up to this—weeks of live musical showcases, local bands giving all they've got, competing against fellow musicians and friends, all culminating in the Orange County Music Awards, an evening of triumphs and heartbreaks while celebrating the best music this little county has to offer. Don your best hipster cocktail attire to find out who wins such categories as Best Punk (which pits bands such as Social Distortion against Death Hymn Number 9), Best Indie, Best Blues and Best Album (with the likes of No Doubt against the Ultimate Bearhug). Eight performances are planned, and that's a lot of set changes so go ahead and knock back a few drinks. Tonight's Lifetime Achievement Award goes to the esteemed Carl St. Clair, Pacific Symphony music director; Lit will receive the Impact Award.

OC Music Awards at the City National Grove of Anaheim, 2200 E. Katella Ave., Anaheim, (714) 712-2700; www.thegroveofanaheim.com. 8 p.m. \$40. —ERIN DEWITT



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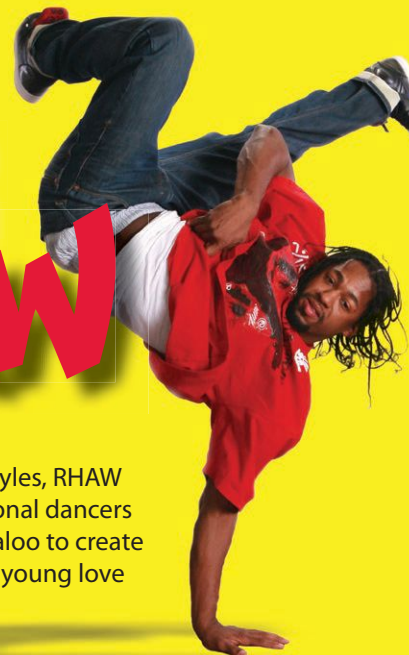
[MAR 16
8PM]

The three sons of 'The Godfather of Irish Music' Tommy Makem—
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and Mickey Spain to deliver traditional folk songs, a mix of boisterous
sing-alongs, and touching ballads.

Rennie HARRIS RHAW

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C S U L B

sun/03/10

[CONCERT]

Dookie Down

Green Day

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Last year, Green Day released three full-length albums, each with a portrait of a band member on the cover—take that, Kiss circa 1978—and now they're about to take *Uno!*, *Dos!* and *Tre!* from arena to arena across America. At Fox Theater Pomona, you'll have a rare chance to see this indestructible pop-punk band at the kind of place they would have played at the beginning of the Clinton presidency. Each of the albums has its own sort of character, with *Dos!* the most off-center and intriguing and *Uno!* the most happily classic, but for the most part, this is Green Day as the universe intends: Cheap Trick for the 21st Century.

Green Day at the Fox Theater Pomona, 301 S. Garey Ave., Pomona, (909) 784-3671; www.foxpomona.com. Sun., 8 p.m. \$50. All ages. —CHRIS ZIEGLER



Behind the Mask

The Phantom of the Opera SILENT FILM AND LIVE SCORE

Before Andrew Lloyd Webber fancied up Gaston Leroux's 1909 novel with a flying chandelier and some awesome '80s synthesizers, Lon Chaney Sr. scared the bejeesus out of unsuspecting audiences in 1925 with a creepy kisser not even a mother could love. Grossing more than \$2 million (at a nickel a pop) and grossing out millions more, *Phantom* kicked off a stream of Universal horror pictures that included the now-classic *Frankenstein* and *Dracula*. Presented here with a soundtrack by organist Dennis James (on a 4,322-pipe calliope), this legendary "beauty and the beast" tale set against perilous Parisian catacombs and ominous, opulent opera houses is one terrifying trip worth taking.

The Phantom of the Opera Silent Film and Live Score at Segerstrom Center for the Arts, 600 Town Center Dr., Costa Mesa, (714) 556-ARTS; www.scfta.org. 7:30 p.m. \$10-\$54. —STACY DAVIES

mon/03/11

[CONCERT]

High Altitude

Mt. Ossa

The latest band to book a weekly residency at Detroit Bar are Mt. Ossa, a five-piece, experimental, indie-pop band. Equal parts ambient, psychedelic and '80s-random, their first single, "Love Jam," baits with an endearingly loose and unpolished quality. It's easy to find on Mt. Ossa's brand-spanking-new Facebook page—and if that track sounds intriguing, have a listen to "Two Flies" on their Bandcamp site. The group's sound is as lofty and far-reaching as the mountain for which they named themselves. We like them, and we think you might, too. They play every Monday night this month with a rotating cast of supporting acts.

Mt. Ossa with Drinking Flowers, Infantree and the Mega at Detroit Bar, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa, (949) 642-0600; www.detroitbar.com. 8 p.m. Free. 21+. —ERIN DEWITT

tue/03/12

[FESTIVAL]

Pleased to Meet You

Royal Rendezvous

It's a very royal Tuesday afternoon on the ocean, as *Queen Mary* meets *Queen Elizabeth*. It's only the third time in more than 30 years that another Cunard ship has saddled up alongside the spectacular *Queen Mary*—and the first time since 1967 that these sister ships have crossed waters (when the original *Queen Elizabeth* was still in commission and the *Queen Mary* made her final trans-Atlantic sail). In honor of the occasion, there's a special whistle salute by both vessels, a ton of live jazz and a breathtaking fireworks display (a *Queen Mary* specialty!). Other festivities aboard the Long Beach ship include special admittance to the Princess Diana exhibit and a special menu at Sir Winston's that includes a whiskey flight. How regal!

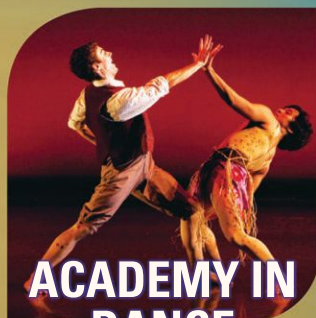
Royal Rendezvous at the *Queen Mary*, 1126 Queens Hwy., Long Beach, (877) 342-0738; www.queenmary.com. 4 p.m. Free. —ERIN DEWITT

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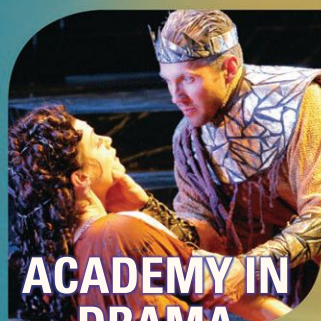
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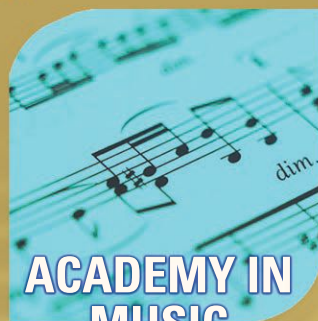
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wed/03/13

[CLUB EVENT]

Brother Act

Showtek

Since their professional start in 2001, baby-faced Dutch brothers Sjoerd and Wouter Janssen have, as Showtek, shot up the EDM charts and put out more singles and remixes than you can shake a neon-pink glowstick at. And with their Crazy Collabs project, they've worked with everyone from Tiesto to Noisecontrollers and other famous names across the dance-music spectrum. Last week saw Showtek release a couple of new tracks to the digital world, "Crunk" and "Slow Down," two loud, manic party anthems that send minds and bodies reeling on the dance floor. Check them out at the Yost, where they blast beats well into the early hours—but remember, kids, it's a school night.

Showtek at the Yost Theater, 307 N. Spurgeon St., Santa Ana, (888) 862-9573; www.yosttheater.com. 9:30 p.m. \$20. 18+. —ERIN DEWITT

[CONCERT]

Got the Blues

Blues at the Crossroads 2: Muddy & the Wolf



Tonight, Blues at the Crossroads honors two musical legends, Muddy Waters and Howlin' Wolf, both. In the Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall, the Fabulous Thunderbirds, James Cotton, Jody Williams, Bob Margolin and Tinsley Ellis perform in tribute to these fathers of modern Chicago blues, who inspired Mick Jagger, Keith Richards, Eric Clapton, and many more rock & roll gods. The Fabulous Thunderbirds, who have toured with the Rolling Stones

and Clapton, headline this celebratory performance, but Cotton happens to be the only living musician who has played with both Muddy and the Wolf.

Blues at the Crossroads 2: Muddy & the Wolf at Segerstrom Center for the Arts, 600 Town Center Dr., Costa Mesa, (714) 556-2121; scfta.org. 8 p.m. \$25-\$59. —JESSICA FORD

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thu/03/14

[CONCERT]



Party Band

STEEL PANTHER

The hardest-working '80s-heavy-metal-resurgence group, Steel Panther relentlessly play shows around SoCal, working to keep the dream alive. As they gear up to strike out next month on a national tour, Michael Starr, Satchel, Lexxi Foxx and Stix Zadinia (not their real names, in case you were wondering) rock the House of Blues stage one more time. A Steel Panther show is as much bad-ass rock theater as hair-metal throwback. Under the guise that they missed their big break back in the days of Nikki and Axl, Steel Panther aren't just another group of dudes who look like chicks. They even have a solid catalog of original songs (with titles such as "Eatin' Ain't Cheatin'" and "17 Girls In a Row") that epitomize all that was glorious about the days of teased hair and zebra headbands.

Steel Panther at the House of Blues, 1530 S. Disneyland Dr., Anaheim, (714) 778-BLUE; www.houseofblues.com. 8 p.m. \$20-\$22.50. 18+. —ERIN DEWITT

[COMEDY]

Big Laughs

John Pinette

He is one of the most unoffensive, disarming, adorable comics working the standup scene today. Just ask the ladies of *The View*, who were delighted when John Pinette graced their stage and, for five entire minutes, made the show watchable. Most of his schtick is in reference to his husky size (see the titles of his comedy albums: *Show Me the Buffet*, *Making Lite of Myself* and *Still Hungry*), but Pinette's sweetly self-mocking humor is anything but trite. And his opinions about camping or the self check-out lane at the grocery store? Spot on, if you ask us. Catch his act this week when he stops by the Irvine Improv—and treat yourself to an evening of good, solid, belly laughs.

John Pinette at the Irvine Improv, 71 Fortune Dr., Irvine, (949) 854-5455; www.improv.com. 8 p.m. Through March 17. \$25. 18+. —ERIN DEWITT

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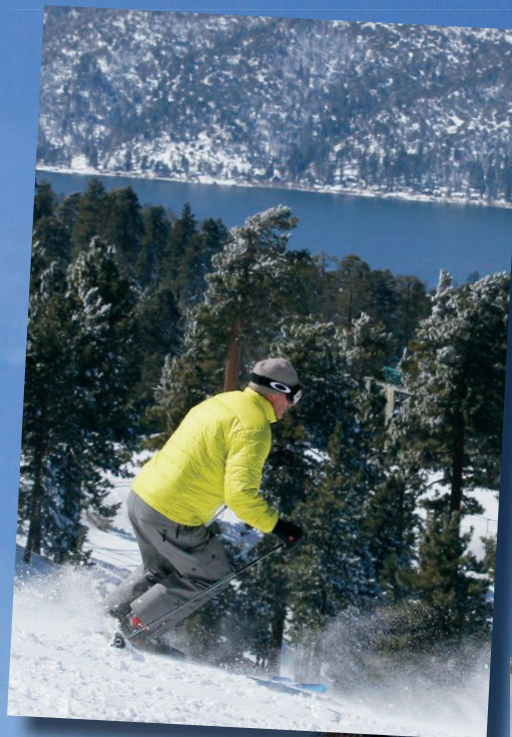
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PHOTOS BY JOSUE RIVAS



Where There's Smoke, There's ARC

Noah Blom's latest restaurant is a throwback to a time when cooks used firewood—and only firewood

BY EDWIN GOEI

I'm pretty sure that at some point in his life, Noah Blom has fried an egg on an electric stove or microwaved a frozen burrito. But walking into ARC Restaurant, his new restaurant at the OC Mix (formerly known as OC Mart Mix), you would have to conclude the man believes Daniel Boone did it right—that if you're going to cook something, you need to chop down a tree for fuel.

Directly outside the glass-encased triangle that serves as both dining room and kitchen, he has stacked the firewood waist-high. There's another tall column behind the hostess and more next to the entrance. Blom is not kidding around with the stuff: ARC restaurant uses the logs—and *only* those logs—to cook everything from the potatoes to the calamari. There are no gas hookups, no dials on the ovens, no Fryolators. For the first time, the word “rustic” would not be squandered here. Heck, the whole operation is downright Amish. From where I sat, I observed only two cooking apparatus, both fueled by a roaring wood fire. One is an oven into which the cooks shove cast-iron skillets through a gaping hole at the front while red-hot logs crackle at the back. There's also a glowing pit of a grill that has a gigantic wagon-wheel metal crank that lowers and lifts grates, all of it resembling the platform Dr. Frankenstein used to bring his monster to life.

No matter whether it comes from the oven or the grill, everything the kitchen produces is imprinted with wood smoke whether you like it or not. In fact, you will soon smell and taste of smoke—the smell will seep into every inch of your clothing, from your loafers to your skivvies. And when you next take a shower, you will, for the first time, heed the instructions on your shampoo bottle, rinsing, lathering,

then repeating. It's the only way to keep the smoke molecules from making a permanent home in your follicles.

Blom—who could be Orlando Bloom's more masculine older brother—worked for Daniel Boulud in New York, opened restaurants for Laurent Tourondel's empire, and did a pair of concepts in San Francisco. ARC seems to be a stripped-down-to-the-essentials reboot of his career. It's an eatery that, despite the pointless “oven-to-table” blurbs on its

The cut-up tentacles and squid meat wiggle and squeak perfectly, flanked by shishito peppers burned to a crinkle and potatoes roasted until the skins char. A dose of acid from vinegar and lemon lifts the dish to heights that most fried calamari can't reach.

website and marketing material, is actually a place serving upmarket camping food and stiff, old-timey cocktails with whole hunks of ice. But the prices are reasonable, with nothing costing more than \$15, and the commitment it makes by cooking only with firewood is admirable, even if it sounds unnecessarily gimmicky.

The menu reads as though it's a haiku—economical with its descriptions, spare with its words. Take the calamari: “potato. lemon. pepper.” I haven't quite figured out whether I want to order the “veg” described as “farm, fire, love” or ask for a rewrite. But you want that calamari. The cut-up tentacles and squid meat wiggle and squeak perfectly, flanked by shishito peppers burned to a crinkle and potatoes roasted until the skins char. A

dose of acid from vinegar and lemon lifts the dish to heights that most fried calamari can't reach.

Blom's dish of pork and beans is much more understated, perhaps the second-best thing served in the cast-iron skillets because it really does feel as though it's something you'd eat by a campfire. Simmered in the searing metal, pinkish hunks of hog tear away in moist shreds, but the subtly sweet white beans are kind of soupy and bland, in need of a shake or two of salt. If beans aren't your thing but you still want pork, you could try the bacon, which is actually a side dish that has two hand-sliced, foot-long rulers of smoked pig belly oven-roasted just short of charcoal and chewing as if they were crossed with a Slim Jim.

ARC isn't yet perfect. The cooks still need time to get used to the imprecision of Blom's chosen fuel. Some things are overcooked to a near-rubbery state, such as the steak; some things tend to be undercooked, such as the potatoes. (I encountered a few morsels that were still too firm in the middle even though the skin on the outside was blistered black.) A fist-sized boulder of fish with corn salsa was also slightly dry, but the meatball dish that included a roasted half-head of garlic and sugary crushed tomatoes was damn near perfect; toast sourced from Dean Kim's OC Baking Co. topped it.

Blom shows he's nothing if not adaptable—he has recently started offering the meatballs as a bona fide sandwich during lunch. But, yes, your clothes will still reek of that sweet, sweet smoke.

ARC RESTAURANT

3321 Hyland Ave., Ste. F, Costa Mesa, (949) 500-5561; www.arcrestaurant.com. Open daily, 11 a.m.-11 p.m. Dinner for two, \$30-\$50, food only. Full bar.

HOLE IN THE WALL

» GUSTAVO ARELLANO

The Crossroads of Anaheim

TONY'S DELI

613 S. Anaheim Blvd., Anaheim, (714) 778-1151.

As my culinary bucket list for Anaheim is quickly getting checked off. Earlier this year, I talked about how I had finally visited Ararat Armenian Cuisine and that the two other great restaurant mysteries in my hometown were the AVIO Dutch Club and Tony's Deli, as I had never seen either of them open yet both had stayed in existence for decades. Well, I just got an invite to attend one of AVIO's Indonesian food nights (!), and business recently took me to Anaheim while Tony's was open.

Having finally enjoyed one of Tony's epic sandwiches, I can now call the deli the crossroads of Anaheim's past, present and future. This place is unapologetically old Anaheim, from the “Wallace for President” bumper sticker to the Diet Vernors chilling in the fridge to the women working behind the counter, each one looking as if she was nabbed from the concession stand at Glover Stadium circa 1975. The cluttered interior and nonexistent lighting remind me of the yellow Alcoholics Anonymous house off Broadway to which I accompanied my dad for meetings as a child. And the sandwiches-only menu is a time capsule of what Anaheim is: a working-class town that wants its food fast and in huge portions. Some of the sammies are standards—a fine French dip, gargantuan subs, a Reuben out of LA's Fairfax district. Others are just bizarre, beautiful creations: the Sheepherder is a mass of meat—corned beef, pastrami, salami and turkey—stacked between rye, while the Chicago might be the last unironic tongue sandwich in North County. And this is also one of the last restaurants left in Anaheim that cater to German palates; between the hefty knackwurst plate, the briny sauerkraut and the braunschweiger sandwich, you want to raise a toast to the German colonists who settled the town.

But that's the thing about Tony's: You always think of it in the past, while Anaheim has dived bravely into the present. The average age of the customers every time I've gone is early 50s—a multicultural mix, but one whose era is eclipsing. Whoever runs Tony's knows this, as it's only open during the week, only open for lunch, and stuck on a strip of Anaheim Boulevard that's seeing city-sponsored gentrification to the north and the *Reconquista* from the south—the crossroads of the town. What to do? Pull up a seat at the bar, and dive into the sandwiches while there's still time.

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spinning top 40



TANTALUM





Monster Wieners!

Martin Tse of Dogzilla

ON THE LINE

» ANNE MARIE PANORINGAN

We normally prefer to interview our subjects away from their places of business, but we often make exceptions for those with luxe *loncheras*. Watching their teams work in such a confined space and acting as host, order taker, cook and server is a daily lesson in camaraderie. We met up with the gang from Dogzilla at an elementary school in Huntington Beach, where we learned there were two other truck stops going on at the same time. It's these competitive nights that remind us just how tough it can be for a truck. Fortunately, Martin Tse is up for the task.

Earliest food memory:

Turtle soup. I thought we were going to the store to get me a pet turtle. It didn't really turn out that way.

Favorite meal growing up:

Fried chicken. I was allergic to lamb when I was a kid, but my parents loved making lamb. So when they made lamb, I got fried chicken. I like Chinese fried chicken, with the drumsticks and hella MSG thrown in there. It was money.

Your best recent food find:

Watermelon juice from Cancun Juice; the tortas there are solid as well.

Most undervalued ingredient:

Furikake seasoning. I don't put it in everything, but it was something I grew up with. I started using it a lot in college. Ghetto college kids put it in rice. There are so many kinds. You can get them with bonito flakes, with or without egg, even sesame seeds. It's not like MSG. You put it on your popcorn, fries, everything.

What do you recommend for first-timers at Dogzilla?

Can never go wrong with a Dogzilla. If you like spicy, go with a spicy Dogzilla.

Who came up with your name?

My good friend Steve. He also came up with our tagline.

One food you can't live without:

Meat. Vegans: don't hate me.

Where was your most recent meal?

I had soup noodles at Mai Phung. It is so good. We go there so much. You can even get extra marrow in your pho. There's always a wait, but it's well worth it.

Best advice for aspiring truck owners:

Don't do it! Just kidding. Work hard. Play hard. Keep on truckin'!

How hot does it get in there? Ever get claustrophobic?

It gets hella hot. And you can't be in this industry if you're claustrophobic.

What is your goal for Dogzilla: brick-and-mortar, more trucks, or stay the same?

We are definitely interested in expanding to a brick-and-mortar shop as long as the timing and location are ideal.

Weirdest thing you've ever eaten:

Crickets might've been the weirdest thing. I don't know. I'm Asian, so [nothing's] really that strange.

Favorite places to eat (besides your own):

Honey's Kettle Restaurant [for the] fried chicken. It reminds me of the stuff I used to get in Chinatown [in San Francisco]. The crunch there is solid.

You're making breakfast. What are you having?

Lots of coffee. Black. No cream, no sugar—nothing. I've been meaning to try Portola. I wanted to buy the Slayer machine just to have it, but it was too expensive.

How did you come up with the specialty hot-dog concept?

It was created on a dare.

Weirdest customer request (and did you do it?):

Dogzilla with yaki noodles and a fried egg. The customer walked off very pleased.

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 88

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food»

Monster Weiners!

» FROM PAGE 87

What surprised you most about operating a food truck?

All the city permits we are required to get.

When you're not in the kitchen cooking, what are you doing?

I'm eating. I'm probably the skinniest fat guy you'll ever know.

Greatest challenge about running a food truck:

Finding the right people that fit the culture and believe in our mission and our values.

Where did you grow up?

Oakland. I came [to OC] for school, but stayed for the weather.

Hardest lesson you've learned:

You can't trust everyone, and put it down on paper.

What did you do prior to running the food truck, and what prompted the decision to own one?

First, we just had a pop-up tent at various events, but we wanted to do the OC Foodie Fest, so we decided to get a food truck.

What's your favorite childhood memory?

Cooking with my mom. I got to cut everything. In the beginning, it was like, "I gotta hurry up and do this because I wanna go out and play." I used to prep as fast as I could. After a while, I wanted to know how she made things. I watched, learned, analyzed and just kind of absorbed everything. We used to make mochi from scratch. It was crazy. We'd get these huge wooden mallets and a little marble bowl. They would throw the rice in there, and we would smash it. I remember the first time I did it I had blisters all over my hand. It was gnarly.

Where's the strangest place you've ever parked? Have you ever hit a street lamp? How are your parking skills?

Is a golf course strange? No, I never hit a street lamp. I defy all stereotypes of Asian drivers because my driving—and, subsequently, my parallel-parking skills—are phenomenal. I can thank the Bay Area for that. . . . I remember the first time we were at Proof Bar. They made us parallel park. It was easy.

Are you superstitious?

Hell, yeah! No white lighters on the truck, ever! We have such a bad white lighter history. The first time someone brought a white lighter onto the truck, the truck didn't work. The second time it happened, we got a flat.

What were you up to five years ago?

I was working and attending the fire academy.

Do you have any skills that are non-food-related?

Certified EMT, Excel, Macros.

What would you be doing if you weren't in this business?

I'd probably be a firefighter. The thing I used to be most excited about was cooking in the firehouse.

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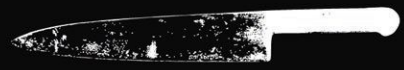
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food»

Old-School Jap-Mex

Teriyaki Tacos at Main Charbroiled Burger

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» GUSTAVO ARELLANO

Long before Dos Chinos, way before Kogi, Japanese and Mexicans in Southern California freely intermingled in the realm of teriyaki. It wasn't just geographic proximity that got *chinitos* and wabs playing around with one another's food; it was also the shared love for thinly cut strips of beef, of sweet marinades, of pairing the creation with rice or stuffing them in tortillas. Oki Dog was the first famous *mestizaje* of Jap-Mex (can you even say that? We can!), but far more beloved in Orange County is the Mexicanized teriyaki bowl of Mos 2 fame.

Far rarer, though, is the honest-to-goodness teriyaki taco: no fancy sauces or sous-vide nuttiness; just teriyaki in the confines of a plain tortilla. In fact, the only place in Orange County I know that sells the relic is Main Charbroiled Burger in big,



TAKE THAT, KOGI!

GUSTAVO ARELLANO

bad SanTana, one of those diners that originally opened as a hamburger stand, but has evolved over the decades to match its neighborhood, the type of place that still refers to the Asian offerings as "Oriental" and is now patronized almost exclusively by Mexicans. The Mexican tacos at Main Charbroiled Burger are fine, but the teriyaki tacos are perfect: sweetened beef held by two big tortillas, spruced up with radishes and cilantro, then doused in Sriracha. Want to know how old-school this dish is? The accompanying *chile de mordida* (a chile to bite on for heat) isn't a serrano, but rather a yellow pepper. Its saltiness goes surprisingly well with the mound, cutting the sweetness of the taco.

This dive has been around for years and still draws a steady crowd, but visit fast: As I've written before, Santa Ana's restaurant gentrification is slowly creeping south on Main. Buy the tacos before some hipster kids new to town try to class them up, sell them at three times the current rate and claim they're "street." Sigh...

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DRINK OF THE WEEK

» DAVE LIEBERMAN

Tequila Fortaleza

Nearly all of the distilled liquor in the world comes from three sources: sugarcane (rum, cachaça, caña), grain (wheat, rice, corn, rye) and potatoes (some vodka). They're not tied to a sense of place—there is rum from Mauritius, and rum from Jamaica, just as there's whiskey from Scotland, and whiskey from Canada.

Tequila and its cousins mezcal, sotol and bacanora are special because they're made from a plant native to Mexico; there's nowhere else in the world where agaves are grown for commercial production of liquor. Spirits of agave have a particular taste that instantly identifies them: wild, grassy, wholly Mexican.

Unfortunately, it's hard to find tequilas that show off the agave taste; because it's such a strong flavor, the large brands either distill it three times to mute the flavor, mix it with sugarcane alcohol, or age it to disguise the flavor.

THE DRINK

Fortaleza is the brand of tequila owned by the Sauza family, whose

namesake was sold off to an international conglomerate two generations ago. The Sauzas are throwbacks in that Fortaleza is made the old way: roasted in a traditional oven instead of an autoclave; shredded with a *tahona* (a giant stone wheel), though they now use a tractor to pull it instead of donkeys; and fermented in wood vats before being distilled.

The result is a tequila blanco that tastes more strongly of agave than nearly any other tequila on the market; it tastes exactly like the alcoholic version of the roasted piñas that went into it (trust me, I've tasted piña). If your experience with tequila is Sauza brand or, worse yet, the José Cuervo Gold we all drank in college, drinking Fortaleza will be an awakening to what tequila should be. It's expensive, sure, but it's worth the price just to see people's faces as they realize what they've been missing.

While Fortaleza reposado and Fortaleza añejo are great tequilas, the blanco is the place to start. Could you make a margarita with it? Sure. But it's much better to sip, alternating with a shot glass of the citrus- and tomato juice known as sangrita.

You can find Fortaleza tequilas at Hi-Time Wine Cellars, 250 Ogle St., Costa Mesa, (949) 650-8463; www.hitimewine.net.



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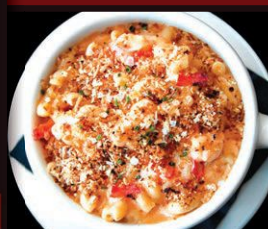
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Grubbing, Guanaco-Style

Pupuseria Salvadoreña brings a taste of the Central American country to Long Beach



PHOTOS BY SARAH BENNETT

Since Long Beach doesn't have a street-food culture in which bacon-wrapped hot dogs and al pastor tacos materialize on street corners, farmers' market pupusas have sufficed for me as the closest thing to sidewalk grub I'll get in this town. Always cheap (\$2 tops), these masa pockets of cheesy goodness are easily eaten in rips with a plastic fork or nibbled on over

LONG BEACH LUNCH » SARAH BENNETT

the edge of a paper plate as though it's a limp pizza topped with savory tomato salsa.

But I can't always wait until Friday, when my nearest farmers' market is open, so a Westside friend recommended I try Pupuseria Salvadoreña instead. After stopping by one Monday only to realize that they are "Cerrado los Lunes," I waited a week and a half, grabbed a fellow *gabacho* friend and

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 94



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food»

Grubbing, Guanaco-Style » FROM PAGE 93

made a second trek up to Willow Street for some sit-down pupusas—a lunch well-worth the wait. Unlike a few of the other Salvadorean restaurants in Long Beach claiming to be home to the best pupusas in town, Pupuseria Salvadoreña doesn't have any Mexican food on its menu, preferring instead to specialize in traditional dishes from the tiny Central American county it takes its name from. This means that breakfast plates come with platanos fritos, meat dishes include pollo guisado (stewed

The revueltas and pollo pupusas were standard but well-executed, with marinated meat and gooey white cheese emerging from the soft, hand-patted tortillas in a way that the farmers' market's pre-made ones never do.

chicken) and salpicon (hash beef), and (thankfully) there is not one chips-and-salsa serving in the whole house.

I was tempted to try a pacaya envuelta (palm flower wrapped in egg) or an employee-recommended chicken sandwich (a whole-plate bargain at \$8), but we came for pupusas, damn it, so that's what we got. Pupuseria Salvadoreña makes eight different fillings for its stuffed-and-fried specialties, ranging from the common revueltas—a mixture of pork, beans and cheese—to the had-to-Google-from-my-phone-while-in-line loroco y queso. They range in price from \$2 to \$2.50 each, so we ordered two a piece, and even with drinks (try the Kolachampan, El Salvador's orange-colored Inca Kola), the total was barely more than \$10. The revueltas and pollo pupusas were standard but well-executed, with marinated meat and gooey white cheese emerging from the soft, hand-patted tortillas in a way that the farmers' market's pre-made ones never do. Even the fermented-cabbage topping curtido was fresher, with a slight vinegar taste that was less sauerkraut and more unrefrigerated cole slaw. And though I had never even heard of the edible Salvadorean vine loroco before I walked in, I finished my lunch a total convert. Part broccoli, part jasmine, the flavor melded supremely with the salty cheese and tart curtido in a way that would have only been mutilated by the presence of anything else.

With more interesting vegetarian options than the farmers' market and a patient staff willing to help *gabachos* find that perfect Salvadorean meal, Pupuseria Salvadoreña is my new favorite not-so-hole-in-the-wall for uncommon Latino eats.

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If I Only Had a Wizard

This Oz is neither great nor powerful
BY SCOTT FOUNDAS

It's a bad omen when, early on in *Oz the Great and Powerful*, we learn that the full given name of its wizard is Oscar, just like the ceremony that star James Franco once presided over as calamitously as he does this sagging Disney tentpole, a gargantuan attempt to turn L. Frank Baum's children's novels and one of the most beloved of all Hollywood movies into a wellspring of fresh product tie-ins and theme-park rides. Don't get me wrong: Franco can be an inventive and unpredictable actor, as in Harmony Korine's upcoming *Spring Breakers*, in which he is a gold-toothed, dreadlocked Big Bad Wolf leading astray four collegiate Red Riding Hoods. But he's fatally wrong for the part of Oz, a huckster sideshow magician who finds himself somewhere over the rainbow, trying to convince the good people of the kingdom bearing his name that he's their prophesied savior.

Central to the movie's conception of this pre-wizardly Oz is that he's a charismatic con artist who survives on his wits and leaves a trail of broken hearts in his wake—a role that calls for a Robert Preston or Burt Lancaster, or director Sam Raimi's own erstwhile muse, Bruce Campbell, with his knack for doing square-jawed heroism even while taking the piss out of it. (Among today's younger stars, Nathan Fillion might have made a nice fit.) But Franco is such a shifty, inward-facing eccentric that he seems as though he should be selling

tickets to some lurid cabinet of curiosities instead of snake oil to the masses. He delivers his lines with the sneering warble of the young Dennis Hopper, and when he flashes his strained smile, it's more disturbing than dashing, less young wizard than young Norman Bates.

Franco delivers his lines with the sneering warble of the young Dennis Hopper, and when he flashes his strained smile, it's more disturbing than dashing, less young wizard than young Norman Bates.

We first see Oz plying his prestidigitation in a sparsely populated Kansas tent circus. The time is 1905—that year of the first commercial cinemas, the nickelodeons. And as envisioned by Raimi and screenwriters Mitchell Kapner and David Lindsay-Abaire, Oz is himself a disciple of Thomas Edison, a practitioner of primitive cinematic illusions. In much the same spirit, Raimi shoots this entire prologue not just in black-and-white, but in the square “Academy” aspect ratio of movies of the pre-widescreen era, switching to color and CinemaScope only after a rogue twister scoops up our half-wit Houdini

and deposits him in the magical land of outsourced CGI. And what a land it is, a gaudy, Day-Glo freak-out modeled on the 1939 Victor Fleming/Judy Garland classic (complete with spiraling yellow-brick road and art-deco Emerald City), but amped up with so much phosphorescent flora and photorealistic fauna that this Oz might share a ZIP code with *Avatar*'s Pandora. But wait, there's more: babbling brooks and crumbling cliffs and winged insects fluttering out from the corners of the frame, until you feel sure you've seen everything modern technology can—but probably shouldn't—do all at once.

After more than enough of that, Oz the man sees a more resplendent vision: that of Mila Kunis, owner of the sultriest come-hither gaze in many a movie epoch, decked out in a crimson jacket and matching wide-brimmed hat that Veronica Lake could have worn no better. It's too bad that Kunis' Theodora isn't the center of her own Oz movie: a nominal “good” witch whose passions rage louder than most, who gives her heart too willingly and, who, when betrayed, turns positively green with jealousy. (Haven't we all been on the wrong end of *that* relationship?) She's still the most dimensional character in this 3-D affair, which otherwise squanders two of the most resourceful actresses in movies today, Rachel Weisz and Michelle Williams, as glowering,

rival spell-casters Evanora and Glinda. Memo to Hollywood: Can you please issue a temporary prohibition on movies that culminate in two magical beings unleashing competing bursts of electromagnetic fury from their fingertips?

Whither Sam Raimi in all this? You don't need a crystal ball to divine parallels between the *Evil Dead* director's own journey to the top of the Hollywood A-list and Oz's trek toward the gold-lined coffers of Emerald City; but if the irony is lost on anyone, it's Raimi himself, who puts this movie dutifully through its Disneyfied paces, with precious little of the gently mocking humor that graced his *Spider-Man* films (at least the first two)—or, for that matter, much humor at all. Occasionally, a touch of Raimi's pranksterism breaks through, chiefly in the form of “China Town,” a literal dinnerware suburb where Oz comes to the aid of a fractured china doll (also the movie's most special special effect). More often, Oz tilts toward the mawkish, as the sham wizard learns the value of selflessness and an incessant Danny Elfman score tugs so shamelessly at your tear ducts it would make the Tin Man surrender his heart on the spot. Throughout, I longed for the Raimi of old—or even of 2009's deliciously gross throwback *Drag Me to Hell*—to send one of the Wicked Witch's shrieking, winged baboons down to put Oz's simpering monkey valet (voiced by Zach Braff) out of his—and our—misery. If he only had the nerve.

OZ THE GREAT AND POWERFUL was directed by Sam Raimi; written by Mitchell Kapner and David Lindsay-Abaire, based on the books by L. Frank Baum; and stars James Franco, Mila Kunis, Rachel Weisz, Michelle Williams and Zach Braff. Rated PG.

SMOKIN'

USSR. *The Berlin File* opens with a botched arms deal between various Russian, Arab, and NK heavies that results in intelligence operative Pyo Jong-seong (the steely Ha Jung-woo) on the run and framed as a defector. Is another rogue Pyongyang agent (Ryoo Seung-bum) trying to shake-up the Berlin foreign office for his own purposes—or merely to get his hands on a \$4 billion bank account formerly belonging to Kim Jong-il? Decked out with enough red herrings to feed the People's Army for a year, *The Berlin File* keeps narrative coherence far down on a priority list that privileges expertly choreographed hand-to-hand combat, hair-raising stunt work (including one spectacular high fall slowed by a string of Rube Goldberg complications), and such familiar genre accoutrements as secret rooms hidden behind bookshelves, shiny metallic attaché cases, and pens concealing fast-acting vials of poison. The enjoyably analog antics end with one character boarding a train bound for Vladivostok, but judging from the evidence, it's Hollywood where we can expect to see Ryoo Seung-wan appear before long. **(Not Rated)** Scott Foundas. *Edwards University Town Center 6, Irvine.*

BLESS ME, ULTIMA Carl Franklin's adaptation of Rudolfo Anaya's classic novel *Bless Me, Ultima* offers some wonderful grace notes, and a magnificent anchor in Miriam Colon, who plays Ultima—also called La Grande—a curandera who works with herbs and who communes with nature and the spirit world. Colon's performance and beautifully weathered visage convey the wisdom and fearlessness of one who has trafficked with and learned to respect forces beyond most human comprehension. Both book and film celebrate spiritual practices that pre-date *los conquistadores* and Christianity, illuminating the ways that assimilation eroded cultural traditions while presenting the Latino community as a dynamic thread long woven into the American fabric. But *Bless Me* ultimately, and ironically, pulls up short because of its fealty to its source material—it attempts to shoehorn in all that the novel covers, which would take a miniseries to do justice. Some poetic moments underscore Franklin's talents but also hint at what the film might have been with more judicious shaping. The lead and supporting actors are largely fine. When young Antonio (Luke Ganalón), our narrator, eats lunch on his first day in a New Mexico school, he's laughed out of class for unpacking a burrito. He flees outside to find a small group of boys slumped quietly against a wall, eating their similarly uncool meals. Volumes are said about class, assimilation, and the ways the assimilated

sometimes shame and scar those who haven't shorn themselves of ethnic or racial signifiers. There is pungency in this shorthand, in these sketches that are richly evocative without saying too much or giving too little. You can't help but wish the movie had more of it. **(PG-13)** Ernest Hardy. *Countywide.*

DARK SKIES Neither execrable enough to warrant being so unceremoniously dumped into theaters, nor so thoroughly un-excrable that we should be outraged by its treatment, Scott Stewart's *Dark Skies* offers passable home-invasion horror of the *Close Encounters* variety, right down to the screws that loosen themselves, the UFO heat lamps suffusing doorways with light, and the bubbling leftovers dumped from the fridge. Of course, without the distractions of Spielberg's technique and goony optimism, audiences have too much time to wonder why the aliens here bother playing creepy faerie tricks on this suburban family—snatching photos from frames and hours from lives—before moving in for their real goal, a rote child snatching. Stewart has some lofty ambitions, some of which he almost fulfills. There's a couple good scares, including one doozy from *The Birds*, but also too much breezed-past off-the-rack weirdness, including a series of *Paranormal Activity*-style temporary possessions that demand the actors must stand there, freeze-tag style, with eyes bugged out and mouths wide open. Keri Russell, as the mother, carves a real performance from a role that mostly demands she wander a dark house in fetching tank tops. Dakota Goyo, as the oldest of the kids, dares to be bluntly uncharismatic in the way of actual 13-year-old boys; he's given an awkward first kiss, a lyrical stoned bike ride, and an arc whose real-life humanity suggests that Stewart aspired to make a movie that might mean something to someone. Too bad that what exists of that movie—the one exemplified by a smartly disorienting climactic setpiece steeped in the sex fears of pubescence—is only about half as long as this one. **(PG-13)** Alan Scherstuhl. *Countywide.*

ESCAPE FROM PLANET EARTH With animated kiddie product as generically sugary and dim-witted as this—the directorial debut of *Despicable Me* storyboard artist Callan Brunker—parents should prep a cost-benefit analysis including (a) the two-hour price of a babysitter, (b) the toxicifying effects of exposing children to consumer waste, and (c) whether they're forced to sit through it, too. "Turn off your brain and hang on," warns Kira Supernova (voiced by Sarah Jessica Parker) as she and her nerdy scientist hubby Gary (Rob Corddry)—noseless, blue

humanoids from a planet bafflingly more *Jetsons*-futuristic than extraterrestrial—rocket-race to save their son. Their kid, in turn, has foolishly run after his barrel-chested, celeb-astronaut uncle Scorch (Brendan Fraser), captured by a villainous general (William Shatner) on the dangerous "Dark Planet" we call home. We're supposed to wonder, "Will Gary ever overcome his timidity and become an intergalactic hero to his family and dismissive bro?" Between the frequent cribbing of character designs (*The Smurfs*, *Toy Story*) and hoary catchphrases (*Titanic*, *The Warriors*), to its unfunny, dated references (Simon Cowell? ZZ Top?!), and pointless excuses for 3-D gimmickry (food fights, paddleballs), *Escape From Planet Earth* makes a compelling case for our disposable culture to finally get wiped out by malevolent aliens. **(PG)** Aaron Hillis. *Countywide.*

GANGSTER SQUAD Originally slated to open in September 2012, *Gangster Squad* was delayed when the movie-theater shooting in Aurora, Colorado, suddenly made a scene of gunfire in Grauman's Chinese Theatre "inappropriate." But released any time, the movie would be a crime against cinematic sensibility. As *Gangster Squad* opens, boss Mickey Cohen (Sean Penn) is the snake in the West Coast Eden of prosperous Los Angeles circa 1949. Los Angeles Police Department Sergeant John O'Mara (Josh Brolin) is offered the chance to put together an unofficial unit to bust up Cohen's rackets. The only other squad member given a story line to himself is Ryan Gosling's Sergeant Jerry Wooters, who takes up with Cohen's arm candy (Emma Stone); this gives Gosling occasion to ply his shy-heartthrob trade, the sheepish boy showing off his cantaloupe biceps. It would be the film's silliest performance were it not for Penn donning a pound of putty to play Cohen—his smushed mug would suit a *Dick Tracy* villain. All of the usual cop-opera conceits—"duty," "badge of honor," "fraternity"—get trotted out, but it's only the pummeling violence that stirs director Ruben Fleischer's interest. *Gangster Squad* caroms from crime to retaliation, from tommy gun assassination to a power drill through the head to a pistol whipping, every bloodletting hyped by Steve Jablonsky's score or peppy period tunes counterpoised for ironic effect. In reducing the great themes of the Warner Bros. crime-film legacy to many bases to be rounded, *Gangster Squad* desecrates the symbols of the movies it alleges to homage. **(R)** Nick Pinkerton. *Regency Charter Centre Cinemas, Huntington Beach.*

A GOOD DAY TO DIE HARD Here's how dumb things get in *A Good Day for Die*

Hard-Related Media Product, which is being sold as a bang-bang movie sequel so that nobody catches onto its true nature: a black-ops experiment testing the human faculty for discovering coherent patterns in unrelated shards of image. Late in the film, as their brains jigsaw director John Moore's shots into their own individual narratives, audiences might discern that the heroes have leapt from a building without first looking down. As a helicopter crashes around them, they splash into the cheapest of fall-breaking contrivances: a well-maintained swimming pool. What makes this so risible is that the building they've jumped from is a long-abandoned military structure on the grounds of the Chernobyl nuclear plant—just the place for a refreshing dip. Welcome to *Die Hard 5: You Thought Surviving a Nuke in a Fridge Was Stupid?* One of those heroes is purportedly "John McClane," a human male we've seen before. But time and indifferent scripting have streamlined him for nothing but brute, relentless motion, leaving us with an engine part we may as well just call *Die Hard* (Bruce Willis). The other hero is *Die Hard Jr.* (Jai Courtenay), a CIA agent undercover in Moscow. What exactly happens in the story I couldn't say; no two viewers will assemble the same narrative from this Rorschach of running men, crashing glass, and hollered exposition. This least of all possible *Die Hards* is constructed like a window some kid broke and then tried to glue back together. **(R)** Alan Scherstuhl. *Countywide.*

HANSEL & GRETEL: WITCH HUNTERS Steven Spielberg and his jaunty little apologue about the 16th President of the United States aside, it's no longer enough in movies for an historical figure or literary character to do simple stuff like abolish slavery or find a man of intelligence and character. Abraham Lincoln is reduced to slaying vampires. Elizabeth Bennet is stuck fighting off zombies. And Hansel and Gretel can't just kill off one cannibalistic witch and call it a day: In *Hansel & Gretel: Witch Hunters*, they've grown up to become bounty hunters who must roam the land, kicking gnarly witch butt. Actually, according to this assertively revisionist reading of the Brothers Grimm, young Hansel and Gretel were led into the woods by their parents for a very good reason, having to do with the naked ambition of a very bad witch, Muriel (Famke Janssen). As it turns out, the grown versions of Hansel and Gretel, now celebrity witch hunters—they're played by Gemma Arterton and Jeremy Renner—have been brought to a small village to find the crone who's been snatching the local children, and damned if it isn't Muriel herself, accom-



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panied by a whole coven of evil-doing uglies in makeup left over from *The Devil's Rain*. There's actually no pleasure at all to be had in this humorless *Hansel & Gretel*, which was directed by Tommy Wirkola, whose previous credits include the 2009 Nazi-zombie horror comedy *Dead Snow*. But there is a truly intriguing mystery here: What on Earth are Renner and Arterton doing in this godforsaken thing? (R) Stephanie Zacharek. *Countywide*.

IDENTITY THIEF Here's a breakthrough, of a sort: The funniest scenes in *Identity Thief* are of Melissa McCarthy and Jason Bateman beating the hell out of each other. McCarthy—playing a multi-named serial liar and credit-card fraud artist we'll call Diana—clocks Jason Bateman with a vicious neck punch. Bateman—as yet another sane fellow whose life is infested with plot-driving crazies—clocks, tackles, and even brains her with the stolen bric-a-brac that clutters Diana's home. I'm not going to argue that this man hitting this woman for laughs is a progressive triumph. But it is at least a victory for whatever is the opposite of sexism. McCarthy gets bashed about like a Stogie, and she bashes back with riotous abandon. Sadly, the rest of the movie is a shambles. So, let it be said, this one time only: Here is a comedy that really could use more inter-gender violence. (I'll leave it to you to parse the sexual politics of McCarthy's insult after Bateman beans her with a knickknack: "You throw like a fuckin' girl!") The rest of the film, they're solo acts, each doing what audiences expect: She yells and exhibits an unsocialized horniness; he regards her with dismay and disgust. Yes, disgust. There's no way around it: The producers of *Identity Thief* seem to find McCarthy's real-world body loathsome. Her big comic sex scene is ruined by director Seth Gordon's refusal to shoot her below the chin, and her Diana is later freighted with a sad-clown back story

and given a princess makeover—penance, perhaps, for having roughhoused like the boys in the first reel. (R) Alan Scherstuhl. *Countywide*.

JACK REACHER In his 2005 novel *One Shot*, Lee Child lays out nine rules for surviving a five-against-one alley fight. Rule nine: "Don't run head-on into Jack Reacher. It's like running into an oak tree." As fans of Child's 17 Reacher novels know, the drifter hero is 6-foot-5, which means that to bring this oak of a man to life onscreen, the comparatively diminutive Tom Cruise (5-foot-7) would have to overcompensate with some serious tough-guy glowering. That was the expectation, anyway. Instead, when surrounded on a dark Pittsburgh street by five fools paid a hundred bucks each to beat him bloody, Cruise's Reacher gives a "you-asked-for-it" shrug, then puts the five down. Convincingly. Written and directed by Christopher McQuarrie (co-writer of *The Usual Suspects*), the movie concerns Reacher's attempts to clear the name of an army sniper arrested for a shooting spree. The opening calls to mind the cold, heartless grace of a Brian De Palma set piece, but McQuarrie maintains a jokey tone throughout the rest of the film, as if to let us know that nobody's taking this lone hero stuff too seriously. And master cinematographer Caleb Deschanel (*The Black Stallion*) must have taken great joy in bouncing light off Rosamund Pike's resplendent blond hair. Should a beat-'em-up action flick be this beautiful? (PG-13) Chuck Wilson. *Regency Charter Centre Cinemas, Huntington Beach*.

JACK THE GIANT SLAYER There are big, tall, terrible, fleshy, bulbous-headed giants in the sky—and, eventually, on earth—in *Jack the Giant Slayer*, *X-Men* director Bryan Singer's big-budget, gently revisionist, 3-D spin on "Jack and the Beanstalk." It's a journey facilitated

by the eponymous Jack (Nicholas Hoult), the naïve farm boy who trades his horse for magic beans that sprout up like some unholy tincture of Miracle-Gro and HGH, putting both Jack and an intrepid princess (newcomer Eleanor Tomlinson) face to face with mankind's potential extinction. The story is hardly original or surprising, but the supremely confident Singer lends Jack an enjoyably old-fashioned showmanship that recalls a time when movie illusions were created by hand rather than by computer. Hoult (*Warm Bodies*) makes for an appealing lead, with the hesitant milk-fed smile of the young Tom Cruise and an unforced chemistry with Tomlinson. Simply put: Any five minutes of this is preferable to all of *The Hobbit*. (PG-13) Scott Foundas. *Countywide*.

PHANTOM Submarine movies are made out of claustrophobia, silent crewmen listening for enemy pings, and usually a bad guy whose personality is probably way too big for the boat. The conventions are so fixed that you'd expect *Variety*'s clubby slang glossary to provide an obnoxious term for the genre. Ping opera? Sonario? To put it in that rag's clipped, annoying parlance, Todd Robinson helms sub melodrama *Phantom*, toplined by Ed Harris as Soviet navy Captain Demi (sorry). Demi is abruptly transferred from his nuclear sub to command a classified mission aboard an aging diesel vessel. The film nixes Russian accents in favor of aud rapping (dude, sorry), and Robinson's screenplay ("inspired" by "actual" "events") is informed by Cold War conspiracy theories. Rogue KGB agent Bruni (David Duchovny) has forged orders to test a top-secret device called Phantom that disguises the submarine's sonar signature as that of any other kind of ship. He intends to seize the sub's nuclear missile and fire it at Midway while impersonating a Chinese

sub, provoking a war that would eliminate Russia's largest rivals. "The only nuclear war we can win—one we don't fight," Demi observes. Locked in the sub's nose, Demi plots with loyal crewmen to sabotage the nuke and retake control. Dicks nix clique's trick (sorry, sorry, sorry), brutally killing several crewmen, and the ensuing suspense story is a pastiche of familiar tropes—effectively paced, but without originality. And what is up with combinations of Ed Harris, water, and unbelievably hokey endings? *Phantom* easily out-bromides *The Abyss* with its eye-rolling final two minutes. (R) Chris Packham. *Countywide*.

SIDE EFFECTS If *Side Effects*, an immensely pleasurable thriller centering around psychotropic drugs, really is Steven Soderbergh's final film, as the director claims it will be, then he has peaked in the Valley of the Dolls. Scripted by Scott Z. Burns, who also wrote the screenplay for Soderbergh's *Contagion* (2011), *Side Effects* shares, at least at first, the earlier movie's icy fury over the corruption of the medical profession. Yet when this initially pointed critique of our quick-fix, highly medicated era becomes a twisty genre exercise—filled with double-crosses, and blouses ripped—it doesn't lessen the movie's punch. *Side Effects* begins with the scene of a crime: blood on the hardwood floors of a modest Manhattan apartment. The film then cuts to three months earlier as 28-year-old Emily Taylor (Rooney Mara) applies lipstick the same sanguine hue as the gore in the prologue. Skeletal, morose, and vacant-eyed, she is prettying herself up for a prison visit with her husband, Martin (Channing Tatum), who is nearing the end of a four-year sentence for insider trading. Yet Martin's release seems to send Emily into deeper despair. A suicide attempt lands her in the care of overextended shrink Dr. Jonathan Banks (Jude



Law). Emily's depression seems to be lifting under a new drug though soon one of its unintended effects—episodes of "acute parasomnia"—leads her to commit a very gruesome sleep crime. Scenes between Catherine Zeta-Jones, perfect as a steely rival shrink, and Law, even better than he was as the fear-mongering blogger in *Contagion*, reminds us what we'll be missing if Soderbergh never makes another film: someone to diagnose our national malaise as coolly and seductively as he has. (R) Melissa Anderson. *Countywide*.

SILVER LININGS PLAYBOOK Director David O. Russell is still doing penance for *I Heart Huckabees*, a wonderfully nutty 2004 passion project exploring the desperate search for meaning within corporate America. *Silver Linings Playbook* feels more personal than *The Fighter*, his last feature, but it also feels like the movie version of a brilliant but unbalanced mind on too many edge-sanding meds. Released from the psych hospital where he was sent after a marriage-ending manic fit, Pat Solitano (Cooper) moves back into his childhood home. Cooper spits out such lines in an unmodulated, rapid-fire assault, his eyes wide and shining. Russell trusts us to draw on, like, every movie we've ever seen to recognize this is what the fearlessness of the mad looks and sounds like; the twist is that Pat's parents—superstitious amateur bookie Pat Senior (Robert De Niro) and the sweetly overbearing Dolores (Jacki Weaver)—speak the same way. The scenes in the Solitano home are a cacophony of mile-a-minute monotone. They're the best, most alive parts of the movie. Like many assholes, Pat brands himself a "truth teller"; he is, of course, the only person who can't see the truth about himself, which is that he's incapable of empathy. It comes as no surprise that the vehicle for this transformation is a slow-building romance with a bruised young widow played with feisty authenticity by Jennifer Lawrence. Manic as it might be stylistically, *Silver Linings Playbook* maintains too even of an emotional keel. It's a film about the alienated that makes sure to alienate no one, a movie depicting wild mood extremes that never rises or falls above a dull hum of diversion. Russell has made a great movie about American malaise; this isn't it. (R) Karina Longworth. *Countywide*.

WARM BODIES Nerd stats for the two kinds of zombies featured in Jonathan Levine's *Warm Bodies*: "Bonies" are leathery, desiccated skeletons with +10 dexterity, +10 strength, and a chaotic/evil outlook. "Corpses," meanwhile, are shamblers with -20 intelligence, but with +20 charisma and a neutral/cute alignment. The story (adapted from the novel by Isaac Marion) is based on Romeo and Juliet in the same way as an essay by a high school freshman with basic cultural awareness of the plot but who didn't do the reading. Julie (Teresa Palmer), the daughter of post-apocalyptic zombie fighter John Malkovich, is separated from her adorable Y/A team by a group of hungry zombies including "R" (Nicholas Hoult), the soulful corpse who kills her boyfriend. He develops a crush and drags her back to his airport lair to protect her from the other, less understanding undead. "R" narrates in wry voiceover, the lucidity of his interior life a contrast to his understandable difficulty with language. Still, it's weird listening to zombies talk at all, particularly in sentences of more than two words. As the zombie culture at large becomes exposed to the romantic chemistry between "R" and Julie, the corpses begin showing signs of life, signified by single heart palpitations. The evil "bonies," who hate love, set out in pursuit of the couple, mostly because once you endow your film's zombies with relatability and courage, you need to find some new bad guys. The film's intentions are way too good for its own good, producing blood-

less romance and more shamefully bloodless carnage. Nobody kisses anyone else until it becomes clear that both parties have pulses, and everyone gets to keep all their limbs. (PG-13) Chris Packham. *Countywide*.

ZERO DARK THIRTY Director Kathryn Bigelow and screenwriter Mark Boal's unofficial sequel to their Oscar-winning *The Hurt Locker* dramatizes the decade-long CIA manhunt for Osama bin Laden, and from the major details to the smallest ones, the reporting is so good you scarcely question a beat. Jessica Chastain gives a sensational performance as Maya, a young CIA officer newly arrived in Pakistan, where her responsibilities include interrogating detained Al Qaeda suspects at secret agency prisons throughout Asia and the Middle East. Be forewarned: "Enhanced" measures such as water-

boarding and starvation are depicted, and without any of the moral outrage some might expect from a Hollywood treatment of this subject. Rather, as they did in *The Hurt Locker*, Bigelow and Boal come not to judge but to show, leaving the rest up to us. This is superb journalism and even better filmmaking, culminating in an electrifying re-enactment of the May 1, 2011, raid on bin Laden's Pakistan hideout. But what impresses most about *Zero Dark Thirty* is the long time it spends in the middle distance, immersing us in the workaday lives of agents and analysts who sacrifice much in the name of something bigger than themselves and struggle against the same petty bureaucrats one encounters in any company—whether the boss is Uncle Sam or merely some guy named Sam. (R) Scott Foundas. *Countywide*.

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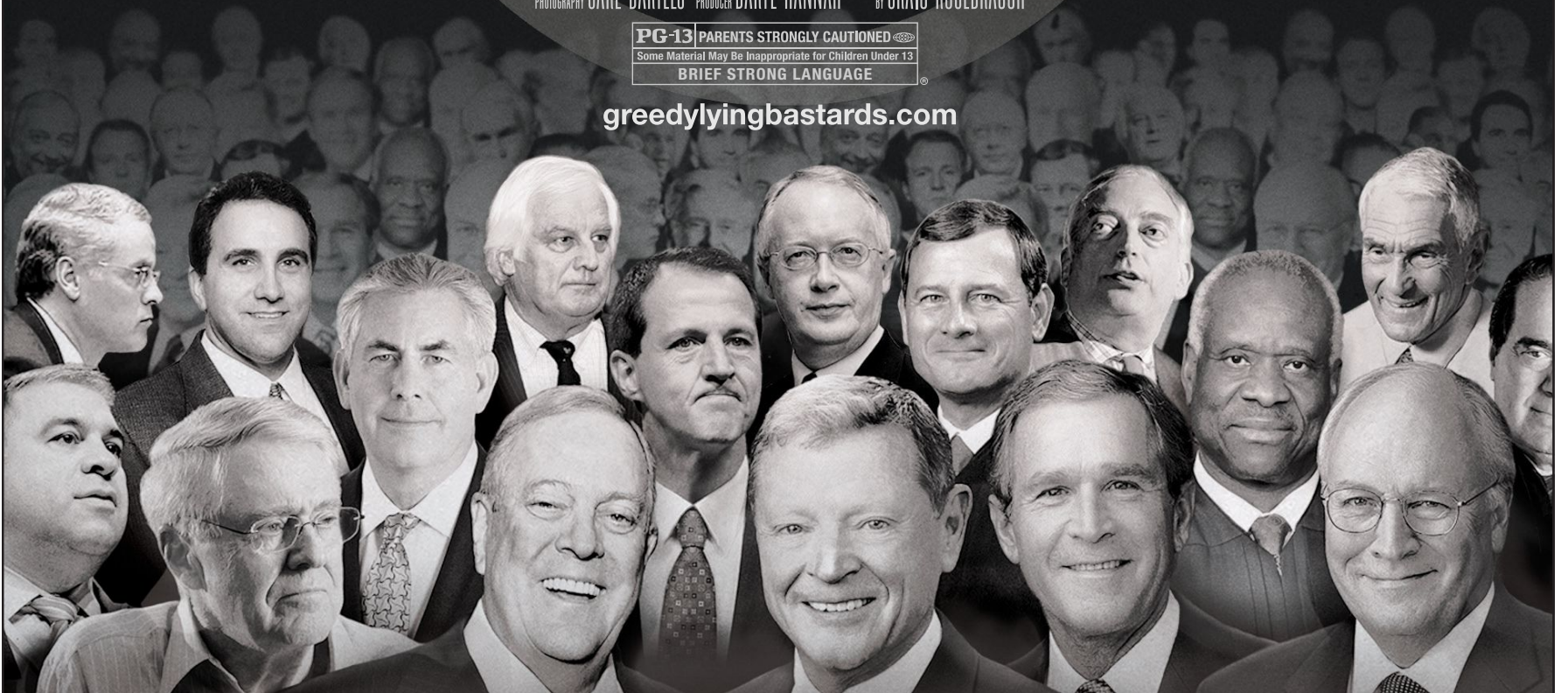
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IN SELECT THEATRES THIS FRIDAY



GAYTÁN: NOMAD IS AN ISLAND

JOSUE RIVAS

Building a Big Tent

Noé Gaytán brings his pop-up gallery space to ignored artists with the Nomad Art Project

BY AIMEE MURILLO

Sitting between tables of handmade jewelry vendors and raucous breakdancing crowds at Santa Ana's monthly Artwalk this February was a large canopy tent. A young, unassuming man stood by it, observing the casual visitors who strolled over, stopped in surprise and glanced inside to see a bonafide art gallery. Occasionally, someone asked him about the art and the tent, and Noé Gaytán calmly explained it was his idea, constructed to showcase artwork by friends and contemporaries who still can't get into a "legitimate" gallery, but who nevertheless want to display their work. At the end of the night, he carefully disassembled the tent and walls, piled them into his mom's van and drove off into the night, planning the next pop-up gallery in his mind.

Gaytán calls his DIY approach to the gallery world the Nomad Art Project (NAP), the name coming from his vision of the exercise as incorporating the temporary occupation of space applied to the context of the vendor fair or art walk. Having staged seven pop-ups at Santa Ana and Pomona artwalks since May 2012, NAP has emerged as a cross between guerrilla street art and rarified art gallery, aligning itself with the cadre of independent artists and vendors that regularly, consciously tries to showcase works to the community in easily accessible venues.

Before starting NAP, Gaytán had plenty of experience in gallery spaces. At UC Irvine (where he majored in its acclaimed Studio Art program), he served as a

docent for the Beale Center of Art and Technology, was active with the student-run gallery Catalyst, and earned a Getty Multicultural Scholarship to prepare exhibits for Pitzer College. He also did an independent-study program with artist/lecturer Daniel Joseph Martinez and dabbled in street art. But after he graduated, Gaytán ran into the eternal art-school-grad crisis. In the cocoon of college life, the Montclair native and his fellow majors were easily able to exhibit work at the school; outside of the university, though, those same students found it nigh-impossible to get so much as a response from curators. And in the real world, it was next-to-impossible to become a serious artist full-time, let alone stay in the habit of producing art, without the reality of making a living.

Gaytán's interests in curatorial work led him to the idea of helping to plan exhibitions of his friends' artwork as a solution to this problem, as a way to bring exposure to their art and as a way to connect with other galleries. But not having his own space, he decided to create one via the tent. Via a Kickstarter campaign, he raised more than \$600 to buy a tent, walls and clip lights.

So far, NAP has included an eclectic variety ranging from photography to assemblage to video. "I'm not really interested in showing traditional painting or sculptures," Gaytán says. "I want to show artwork that's fresh and interesting to people, something they aren't likely to see anywhere else."

With very little hindrance to his

vision—no pesky board of directors, no complaining donors—there's still some level of difficulty in operating NAP. "For starters," Gaytán says, "the setup alone is tough, since I have to build everything up myself with hammer and nails and take it apart afterward, then haul each part to my car."

Gaytán also admits it has been difficult

"I want to show artwork that's fresh and interesting to people, something they aren't likely to see anywhere else."

to produce a show every month as he originally intended; with grad school on the way, it might be even more difficult to find the time to plan one. "I definitely want it to evolve from this," he says. "I want NAP to possibly go to the Long Beach Artwalk or the Los Angeles Artwalk. It is still a project, so I plan to find a way to incorporate it into my curatorial studies in public art."

Despite the arduous labor, Gaytán says, it's all worth it just to be able to create dialogue with people who take the NAP plunge. "Some people take a peek and walk away, and that's fine because I totally understand the art will not interest everyone," he says. "But what makes it all worth it to me is when someone comes in and starts a conversation, and they say, 'Oh, I've never seen this before!' I've had that conversation a number of times."

TRENDZILLA

» TAYLOR HAMBY

The Wearing of the Green

Everything's better when you add a little Irish spice to it—Van Morrison on a lonely night or Bailey's in your coffee morning, noon and night. And with a certain holiday celebrating the cultural heritage of the Land of Saints and Scholars coming up, you'll have all the more reason to Irish it up.



That said, I struggle every St. Patrick's Day to find outfits that are both green and flattering. This year, I'm forgoing that struggle and opting to accessorize instead. One of the easiest and prettiest ways to dress up is to play with green in your makeup routine (because we need another excuse to hit up Sephora, right, ladies?). Here are some fun things to try:

Urban Decay's Heavy Metal Glitter Liner in "Stagedive" takes a bold, green eye to a new level with this incredibly sparkly liquid eyeliner (\$18). Smooth the liner over a sultry eyeshadow paired with a more neutral shadow (Nars has a beautiful emerald-and-taupe duo for \$34).

Sephora and Pantone Universe have teamed up and recently released a whole line of cosmetics in what they've dubbed "the color of the year." You'll find a nail polish, brush set, liquid eyeliner, jumbo eyeliner, eyeshadow and more all in emerald. The mascara could potentially be the most fun to play with on St. Paddy's Day.

Why let your face have all the fun? The new **Colormash Hair Shadow** is perfect for popping in some green streaks or tips that wash out after a night of drinking green beer. It comes in a round eyeshadow-like case; rub it in generously with your fingers, then set with hairspray.

Because nail art's all the rage these days, why not do something a little more adventurous than plain green polish? Dramatic makeup house **Illamasqua** makes creating art *über-easy* with its new speckled nail varnish. The polish imitates the speckles of a bird's egg in five different colors—grab a bottle of "Mottle," and you're good to go!

Now you'll have no excuses for getting pinched on St. Patrick's Day. Unless you're into that sorta thing. . . .

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IF YOU WATERBOARD
HER, DO IT WITH
DOLLY PARTON
PLAYING



LUZENA ADAMS

Deaf By Stereo

Five songs that make Kathleen Madigan want to drive her car off a bridge

BY ALI LERMAN

Kathleen Madigan has done a lot in her comedy career, from entertaining the troops overseas to amusing audiences across the States to winning awards for being a kickass comedian. She has brought plenty of laughs to late-night TV, radio shows, and comedy CDs and specials. Since we figured she clearly has everything to live for, it made us wonder if she, as with so many of us normal folks, has a list of songs she simply can't stand, a set of tunes so heinous she'd rather run her car off the road than listen to them when they come on the radio. Is this a twisted and dark premise for a list? Maybe. But hey, I think we can all agree there are some really bad music choices out there, so you just never know what could push you over the edge.

Before she crashes into the City National Grove of Anaheim on Friday, Madigan gave us a list of picks from bad to worse that usually make her want to end it all before the end of the song.

5. Lana Del Rey

Anything sung by Lana Del Rey because, dear God, life can't be that bad at her age. Her music is what I picture that I'd hear at the IRS when an audit is going badly. First confusion, then resignation, then desperation, and then despair. All really fun feelings!

4. Frank Ocean

Frank Ocean's "Forrest Gump," or whatever that was on the Grammys. I'm not familiar with the rest of his work, but this particular song made me wanna throw myself in front of a bus. Maybe that's how he felt the day he wrote it, but if not, Frank and I just have really different ideas of what enjoyable is.

3. Classical

Anything in the classical genre would do because it's dramatic, and drama is good for imminent death. Classical music always reminds me of *Amadeus*, which reminds me of insanity, and insanity reminds me of extreme drama. When the violins get going, really, anything can happen.

2. Dolly Parton

Dolly Parton's "Better Get to Living," in particular, just in case you change your mind and wanna bail. She will make you feel guilty for complaining or quitting anything. I could be being waterboarded, and if they played Dolly, I'd think, "Well, it's not that bad. I could be being drawn and quartered, but I'm not. It's just a little upside-down swimming."

1. George Strait

George Strait's "He Stopped Lovin' Her Today" is the saddest song ever written. "He Stopped Lovin' Her Today" is sooooo sad. It really just makes anyone want to jump into the coffin with the dead guy because he's so sad.

KATHLEEN MADIGAN

performs at the City National Grove of Anaheim, 2200 E. Katella Ave., Anaheim, (714) 712-2700; www.citynationalgroveofanaheim.com. Fri.,

8 p.m. \$29.50 For more info, visit www.kathleenmadigan.com or follow her on Twitter: @kathleenmadigan.

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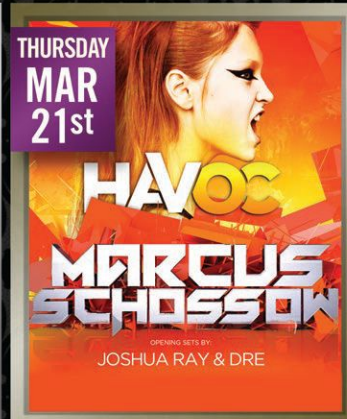
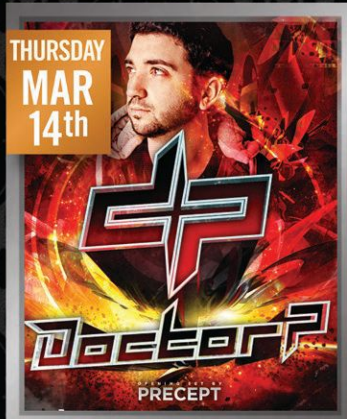
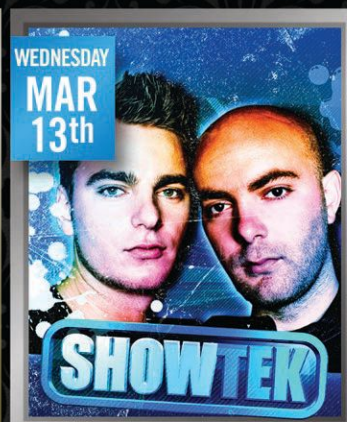
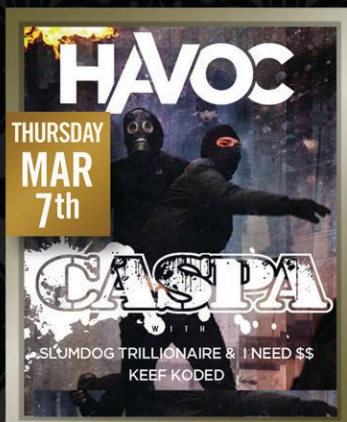
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Spotty-fy

Why does the streaming music service Spotify keep ripping people off?

BY EMILY LUNDQUIST

Ten dollars per month is a small price to pay for practically every piece of recorded music except anything by the Beatles. Which is why, late last year, I signed up for Spotify. Only two months in, however, I was out—and feeling as if I'd been ripped off. Turns out I'm not the only one.

Spotify Premium—the ad-free, mobile subscription arm of the streaming-music service, based in New York—has accumulated more than 5 million global users since it became available in the U.S. in 2011. All the kinks have surely been worked out, right? Not quite. When I signed up in December 2012, I was charged \$9.99, the price for one month of service. The next day, my credit card was charged another \$9.99. That's when the trouble began.

After exchanging emails with multiple customer-service reps, I gave up on a refund from Spotify and instead filed a claim with my bank, Wells Fargo. The funds were returned, and my Spotify login promptly stopped working. Fair enough.

But one month later, Spotify charged my credit card another \$9.99. More emails ensued. The responses I received from my customer-support agent, though sympathetic, did little to quell my frustration. "I am sorry if I came across wrongly," one said. "I just meant the outcome was that we could not help you, and you ended up getting charged again. That is what we tried to prevent, as I knew the bank would not help you."

A dozen emails in, still without a refund, I received an explanation—a second account under my name was at fault for the erroneous charge. In both instances, with one phone call, my bank identified the charges and made things right.

And that illustrates the problem with Spotify: It's not about the 10 bucks, but rather how the company addresses account problems, with inefficient, web-based customer support; blind shuffling between representatives; and a lack of timely resolutions.

My friend had a similar problem. When he canceled his service in January, he immediately received a pair of \$9.99 charges and was told his subscription would continue until March. When he responded via email that he wanted his service canceled immediately and the extra charge removed, he received this note:

"The two charges that you see on your statement are both linked to your Spotify account. It's possible you accidentally pressed the subscription button twice. But don't worry about having lost any payments. Our system



has taken account of both payments and has extended your Premium subscription to two months. This means that you will not be charged again on your next billing date. Your subscription will continue as usual the month after. However, if you would like the second payment refunded and your subscription to continue with normal monthly payments next month, just let us know your date of birth and the last four digits of your payment card."

In other words, it's probably your fault, but even if it's not, never fear—we'll just continue your service and keep charging you. (My friend's money was refunded after he mentioned I was putting together this story.)

Of course, Spotify isn't the first web-based subscription service to mishandle billing complaints. In 2003, AOL settled with the Federal Trade Commission over charges of unfair business practices, which included billing Internet subscribers after they requested their accounts be canceled and failing to properly execute account closures.

But I wanted to speak with someone at Spotify USA Inc. My conversation with Graham James, head of communications, was terse and tense, and most of my questions went unanswered.

For instance, I asked about user-

submitted web-contact forms. On the Spotify support forums, moderators converse with users seeking help on issues ranging from playlist syncing to billing inquiries. Search the word "refund" on the forums, and you'll find 40 pages of related threads, with complaints about being charged for free trials, as well as duplicate charges.

For almost every question on the forums, moderators instruct users to submit web-contact forms to reach a customer-support rep. When users later complain about receiving only an automated reply, the moderators instruct them to reply to those "no-reply" emails in order to reach an agent. Confusing, right?

James did not know whether those extra steps were necessary to get in touch with a representative. In fact, James said, he could not discuss the internal workings of Spotify's customer support.

And what happens when your account is deleted? Does Spotify hold on to your credit card information? "We don't really discuss that," James said. "Suffice it to say, there is a very secure method, and anybody's payment is kept at the highest security imaginable."

But how could anyone trust Spotify? To me, one thing is clear: Spotify is doing something wrong.

EXENE SAYS
» EXENE CERVENKA

'I Had a Dream That I Woke Up, But It Was Too Late!'

Our esteemed punk-rock columnist Exene Cervenka decided she wanted to share a short story with you. It comes in parts, starting this week. Since most everything she does is badass, we figured this would be no different. The following is part one.

She woke up and instantly looked down at the black markings on the band of indestructible technology permanently circling her left wrist. It was still there.

The sun would be up any second and, with it, the lights overhead in the barracks. Then she would stand with the others, everyone lined up at the foot of their beds, facing front, hands down at their sides, and eyes straight ahead. No speaking. No movement. No emotion.

The camp commander would walk quickly down the line, as soldiers behind him noted that everyone was present. The camp commander didn't show much interest in the interns; he'd glance at one or two faces and never say a thing. He just wanted them to know there was an official, international, military authority in charge.

They have been interned in the resettlement camp six months or five or six-and-a-half, depending on who's doing the guessing. The women have learned how to turn into statues. If they move or tilt their heads or shift their weight, the soldiers trailing the commander will turn on the offender. She'd been pulled out of morning lineup once. With two other women—one older, one younger—she was walked across the courtyard to an office building that was heavily guarded. A soldier silently scanned her wristband. He looked at a computer screen. He typed a few words. Then he said, "You can go." All without looking at her.

She was escorted back to the barracks by two Mexican soldiers. Her bed had been made, and her work clothes were laid out. She took off her scratchy nightgown and pulled on her khaki uniform, a one-piece jail outfit, elastic at the waist; one size doesn't fit all. She put her slippers back on, rubber-bottomed canvas made in China. She wondered if they'd issue her new ones since hers were wearing out. Then she headed out the door, where two soldiers stood on either side.

Her breakfast would be hurried now, so she walked as quickly as she could to

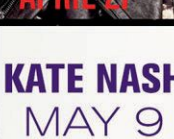
» CONTINUED ON PAGE 106

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music»

Exene Says
FROM PAGE 105

the mess hall. There was still food being doled out. Prunes, oatmeal, white bread, orange drink, coffee, milk. No butter, no salt, no fresh food. And every day, the exact same thing, served by latent psychotics, full of hate and venom.

But she ate it all, as she did every day. They all did. No talking in the mess hall. Each barracks had a schedule of work to do. There was nothing meaningful, of course. There were no fields to weed or beans to pick, no laundry or dishes or cooking, no fences to paint, or grass to cut. Once a week, soldiers would oversee six interns cleaning the bathroom. They all loved that job because it was something to do.

It surprised her that what she missed from her old life were the things she often didn't regard as that meaningful. Cooking was what she missed the most of all. She would replay in her mind favorite dishes. She would daydream the whole event—walking out to the backyard garden, picking fresh herbs, lettuce, a tomato. Then she would chop it all, again in her mind, and measure it all, with a little olive oil and balsamic, and make the most delicious salad!

The women would trade recipes, so they could each try a new dish every night. The next day, she would ask, "How did that meat loaf and garlic asparagus turn out?" And the other woman would reply, "Oh, it was fantastic! Very tasty! Though I think I overcooked the meat loaf just a little."

Mostly, she and the others were confined to their stifling-hot barracks, where they lay on top of thin polyester blankets crying. Sweating and crying. Wondering where everyone else was. And if they knew where she was. And if they did, why couldn't they get her out? She didn't know why she was there, or where she was, or how long she'd be there, and she was ordered not to ask. No one else knew either.

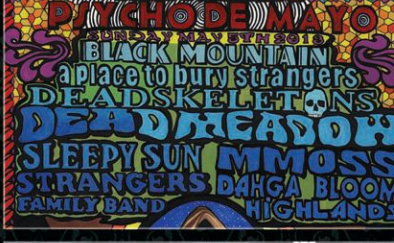
There were 100 women in her barracks. And it had been whispered there were 80 barracks. That's 8,000 women. They were of all types: young, old, dark, fair, tall, short, heavy, thin, pretty, plain, sick, well. There were constant breakdowns. At night, with the lights out, they would whisper to one another. The barracks was under audio and day and night-vision surveillance. The women talked in a telepathic code.

She wondered why they had all been taken. None of them were criminals or terrorists, she hadn't been accused of any crime. When she asked to make a phone call, they said no. when she said it's my Miranda rights, the soldier told her that she could make a call after she was processed.

She was horrified when two female guards made her strip, watched her take a shower, and then ordered her to bend over and hold onto the sink. They did a body-cavity search, and she submitted because she knew they meant business, and it was bad enough. She put on her uniform and her slippers, was led to her bed, sat down, and knew.

She knew that, yes, it was all true. The bankers and the government and the Bilderberg group and the wars and the corruption and the bailouts and trillions in debt and TSA and 9/11 and FEMA camps and the Illuminati—all of it, it's all true. And she always knew it in her gut.

Exene Cervenka is a writer, visual artist and punk-rock pioneer. The OC transplant is the lead singer for X, the Knitters and Original Sinners.

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music»



Stand Up and Shout

Hell or Highwater turn an alt-metal drummer into a front man
BY NATE JACKSON

Few things trigger as much anticipation and anxiety as watching a respected drummer step out from behind the kit and grab a mic. The paradigm shift from rocking the back of the stage to the front is rarely successful unless you're Dave Grohl. So for Hell or Highwater's Brandon Saller, the absence of fear or influences when it comes to drummers-turned-singers was probably the best thing for him to literally get off his ass and start a new band.

"Even as a drummer, I always just kind of did my own thing," he says. "It's always been important, and especially now with a new project, to just be my own man and do what comes natural and just go for it."

It has been about two years since Saller's previous band—Yorba Linda-bred hardcore heroes Atreyu—went on hiatus and really forced him to seek new outlets for a sound he had spent more than a decade developing. Before Atreyu, the duality of the tortured screams of Alex Varkatzas paired with Saller's high-arching melodic vocal was a rarity in that genre, when it occurred at all. Saller's fulfillment of the latter made him an instantly recognizable voice in the scene. His voice now stands on its own on the new, aptly titled Hell or Highwater debut, *Begin Again* (released Feb. 5). The process of self-evaluation right before taking a major risk is something that plays a huge role in Saller's style shift, going from traveling with brutal hardcore bands to touring with recently reformed stadium rockers the Darkness.

"I remember being a little nervous our first few gigs about how the crowd would react to us," Saller says, "but it actually turned out okay every time, and we've had some crazy energy at the shows on this tour so far."

In 2011, Saller started a solo venture with a producer through whom he'd funnel his song ideas to come up with full songs. But it wasn't really until he put his current band together—including guitarists Matt Pauling and Neal Tiemann, bassist Joey Bradford, and drummer Captain Carl—that

the sound he was seeking was realized.

"It was one thing getting my bearings with the project by myself in the studio," he says. "But I feel fortunate now that I'm in a band in which everyone is a great songwriter in their own right and we're able to have that full band dynamic that the songs really need to grow and mature on tour."

Trading merciless distortion and rage for rocket-propelled melodic rock à la Avenged Sevenfold or Alkaline Trio, Hell or Highwater's sound is different not only for Saller, but also, presumably, for most

"It's always been important, and especially now with a new project, to just be my own man and do what comes natural and just go for it."

fans of his old band who don't know what the singer/drummer has been up to lately. So far, standout favorites such as "Gimmie Love" and "Tragedy" still pack a lot of the same melancholy-filled lyrics that wouldn't exactly throw off the average hardcore fan. And Saller doesn't claim to have any bold new influences that inform his songwriting. However, he says, he was surprised at the amount of new fans Hell or Highwater are attracting who admit to missing the boat on his old work.

"It's surprising even at hometown shows how many fans will come up and talk to me and don't mention anything about me playing drums or anything, and I get the sense the show they saw was their first impression that isn't reliant on what I did with my old band," Saller says. "That's a cool feeling."

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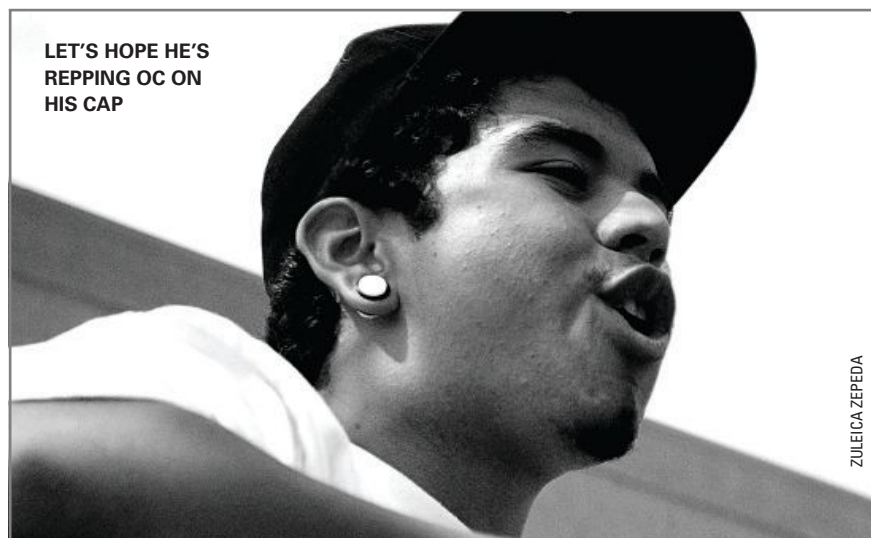
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Alan Navarro doesn't like starting what he can't finish. It's a motivating factor that inspired the moniker Endz, though it's only the beginning for the MC with endless potential. Back in the day, hip-hop was there when he was a kid trying to get his act together. "In high school I just never gave a fuck. I had a lot of police contact. I got caught up on some stuff, but I loved listening to hip-hop," he says.

"What got me into it was just that I could express myself at no cost, and every time I went through some bullshit, writing was like therapy to me," the 22-year-old Navarro adds. Instrumentals don't always come free, though, and producer Yon P Beats gave him his first one for \$20. "He saw my potential and never charged me again."

Others would soon also take notice. Endz was around 18 years old when he really began putting his music out, doing underground shows in Los Angeles. But it was back in his hometown when a chance encounter proved pivotal. "I met Rage through a sack. I was picking up weed," Navarro says of his fellow Orange-based rapper. The two sparked a conversation and began collaborating. "We got together and dropped a whole CD that ended up influencing the whole Orange scene."

On that 2009 album, *Abstract Inspirations*, the standout track "Cops" featured back-and-forth storytelling rhymes about being hassled by authorities. Two LA-based, film-school students turned the song into a viral YouTube video that helped attract attention.

Stepping aside from collaborative projects, Navarro followed up by spending an entire year working meticulously on his first real solo effort. The resulting mixtape, *Half N Half*, finally dropped in early 2012 and featured beats by talented local producers as well as rhymes over established instrumentals such as Grand Puba's classic "A Little of This." It helped build momentum for Endz as an MC with an energetic, near-flawless flow. It didn't hurt that the collection also offered up "Orange County Livven," an undeniable banger that comes correct in reppin' our humble county.

Quick to expand his boundaries, Navarro wasted no time in changing up styles on *No Colored Flowers*, an EP released to fans for free last Christmas. "I felt like anybody can rhyme nowadays. It's hard when someone can really sit there and pour down their exact feelings," he says of wanting to add depth to his delivery. Even so, the rapper harbored doubts while recording. "No one has heard me this deep. The beats are slower. The songs are more serious. It wasn't going to be the hype, catchy shit from *Half N Half*."

The new material was well-received and bore the imprint of musical influences gained from joining the Locally Grown Collective during the summer. The rap group netted an OC Music Awards nomination, a ceremony Navarro was unaware of this same time last year. And the expansion and experimentation continues. "I know boom bap's my home, though," he says, noting his love for Pete Rock and J Dilla beats.

All the attention that came to Endz in 2012 caught the rapper off guard, but Navarro—whose "odd roots," as he puts it, stem from Acapulco, Mexico—keeps it humble with people he meets while on the grind. The rapper's first solo headlining show is Friday, but he already has his sights set on a certain annual, hip-hop festival stage.

"I see EndzGotOddRoots at Paid Dues, dog!" he says, pounding his fists on the table for added emphasis. He also has advice for those along the way. "If you want to fuck with me, come real or fucking get to steppin'!"

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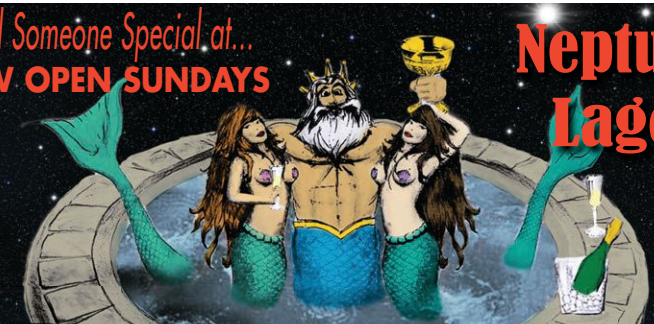
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9 SONGS WITH GOOD SEX ADVICE

SOMETIMES PAYING ATTENTION TO SONG LYRICS PAYS OFF

BY JENA ARDELL

We decode some great sex advice in these sensual songs:

1 R.KELLY, "BUMP N' GRIND"
Lyrics: "So show me some ID before I get me deep into you."
Lesson: First things first, make sure she/he is of consensual age. (Too bad R. Kelly didn't take his own advice).

2 MISSY ELLIOT, "WORK IT"
Lyrics: "Not on the bed, lay me on your sofa/Phone before you come, I need to shave my chocha/You do or you don't, or you will or won't you/Go downtown and eat it like a vulture."
Lesson: Keep it maintained down there at all times—in case of short notification of fornication.

3 COLOR ME BADD, "I WANNA SEX YOU UP"
Lyrics: "Let me take off all your clothes/ Disconnect the phone, so nobody knows, yeah/Let me light a candle, so we can make it better."
Lesson: A cell phone is a mood killer, especially if your ringtone is something obnoxious such as Macklemore & Ryan Lewis' "Thrift Shop." And candles will mask any odors you may have lingering in your apartment.

4 LIL' KIM, FEATURING SISQO, "HOW MANY LICKS"
Lyrics: "Lick me right the first time, or you gotta do it over/Like it's rehearsal for a Tootsie commercial."
Lesson: If at first you don't succeed, try, try again . . . without complaining.

5 TEDDY PENDERGRASS, "TURN OFF THE LIGHTS"
Lyrics: "Let's take a shower, shower together/ I'll wash your body, and you'll wash mine, yeah/ Rub me down in some hot oils, baby, yeah/And I'll do the same thing to you."
Lesson: Showering before the act is the most sensual form of OCD.

6 RIHANNA, "COCKINESS (LOVE IT)"
Lyrics: "Make me your priority/There's nothing above my pleasure/She may be the queen of hearts/But Imma be the queen of your body parts."
Lesson: Nobody cares if you're taken when they want to get in your pants. If you don't make your lover your priority, he/she will find someone who will.

7 KOOL G RAP & DJ POLO, "TALK LIKE SEX"
Lyrics: "Only 19 and over permitted/No matter how much young girls wanna be with it/You ain't ready for the bed."
Lesson: Some men have slightly higher

standards than others. (Kool G Rap isn't one of them; he just wants someone a little more experienced to shish kebab.)

8 PORTISHEAD, "GLORY BOX"
Lyrics: "So don't you stop being a man/ Just take a little look from outside when you can/Show a little tenderness/No matter if you cry."
Lesson: If you want to be perceived as a sensitive lover, listening to Portishead is the quickest way to become weepy.



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9 DAFT PUNK, "HARDER, BETTER, FASTER, STRONGER"
Lyrics: "Work it harder, make it better/Do it faster, makes us stronger/More than ever hour after, our work is never over."
Lesson: Bust out those kegel exercises, boys and girls. Because at the end of the day, power and stamina are always key.

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EDM Evolution

Why Tiësto became an indie-inspired electro chameleon

BY ALEJANDRA LOERA

Tijs Michiel Verwest is more than just an electronic-dance-music DJ and producer. He is the quintessential originator of the iconic brand Tiësto, which has been revolutionizing and changing the game for dance-music artists all over the world for almost two decades. With Grammy nominations, numerous awards, collaborations with Guess clothing, the No. 1 podcast on iTunes, his own Madame Tussaud's wax statue and residencies all over the world, the highest-paid DJ on the Forbes list shows no signs of slowing down.

Though he suffered a minor touring setback because of back problems on his 2012 College Invasion Tour, he is making up the missed dates this winter. Presented by Goldenvoice and Insomniac, his March 2 performance at the Staples Center marked just the second time a DJ played a show at that venue. (Kaskade was the first, selling it out with his Freaks of Nature Tour last summer.)

Today, Tiësto has evolved into his current sound, which is all over his weekly radio show, *Tiësto's Club Life*. "When I was in Los Angeles in 2008, for six months, I went out to the clubs a lot and realized I was ready for a change. I was playing the same tracks for a long time, and I got kind of bored with it," Verwest says. "American DJs were playing lots of mainstream hip-hop and groovy beats at the club, incorporating a lot of eclectic stuff, and house music was getting more and more popular." So early in 2009, influenced by what he heard in the LA scene, he re-invented himself as an uplifting, big-room, progressive/house/

indie-inspired electro chameleon and has collaborated with just about everyone in the music business.

"This year, I was in Playa del Carmen, Mexico, for a friend's wedding, and I decided to play at BPM Festival spontaneously," he says. "I like deep house a lot. It's kind of like my hobby, and since BPM is known for that style of music, it made sense for me to play something different and try a deep-house set."

The house heads were in for a surprise as they would never expect that sort of set from Tiësto, but Verwest continues to prove he can be innovative and step outside his comfort zone for the love of the music. When asked what's currently on his iPod, he says, "I listen to everything from a lot of deep house to indie bands and dance acts such as Passion Pit. I also like to listen to a lot of chill melodic music on the road. It's a good break from the crazy stuff you hear at shows all night."

Just because he is listening to chill music, don't expect the tour life to be chill as well. "We have lots of after-parties since the shows are done early every night. The DJs and I hang out, talk about deejaying and new tracks," he says. "I may even play an after-party if we have the right venue and I'm in the mood for it."

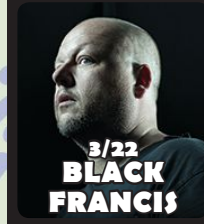
His favorite part, however, is the crowd and its energy. "You feel the difference when they pay attention, singing along and responding to everything you do," Verwest says. "Last night [in Amherst], they screamed and sang along to every track. That's when you have the crowd in the palm of your hand and deejaying is the best job in the world."

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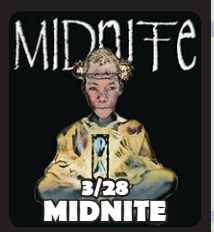
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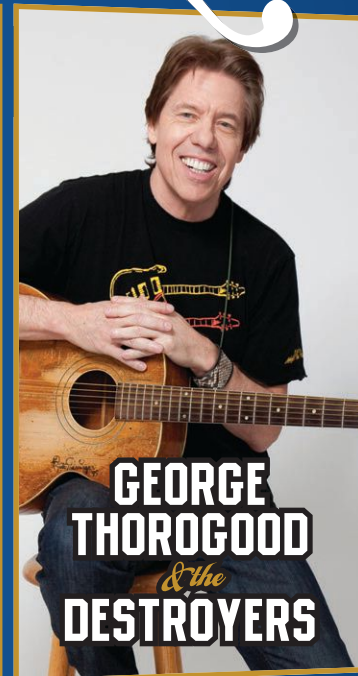
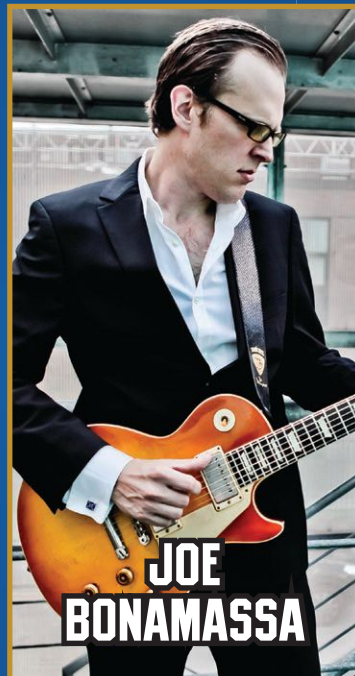
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A WARRIOR WEEKLING

Last Shot

A concert photographer's battle with cancer
BY ANDREW YOUSSEF

Longtime concert photographer and Weekling Andrew Youssef found out almost two years ago that he had Stage IV colon cancer. In that time, he has continued to shoot tons of music events for us on top of other freelance work while holding a day job at a hospital, of all places. As he continues to fight for his life, he opens up on our Heard Mentality blog in a series that allows him to tell his story in his own words.

It was close to two years ago that I passed out at work. Fortunately, I work as a pharmacist in a hospital and was immediately rushed down to the emergency room. During the several months prior to this incident, I had lost about 20 pounds and started to get fatigued very easily. The streaks of blood in my stool probably should have raised more red flags. At the age of 35, my thoughts jumped to a possible diagnosis of Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis.

When my gastrointestinal doctor appeared in my room, he suggested I have a colonoscopy and a CT scan to see what was happening. After the CT scan, I was wheeled down for the colonoscopy. Eager to hear about my results, I asked my doctor what the scan showed moments after being injected with some anesthetics. The last thing I remember before going under was the doctor tell-

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 118

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Last Shot FROM PAGE 117

ing me the scan showed I had some spots in my liver. Why would anything be in my liver?

I awoke in the recovery room in a daze, and the nurse asked the doctor if he wanted to give me the results. He said he would tell me upstairs in my hospital room later that day. I can remember the moment vividly when the doctor told me that I had a tumor obstructing my colon by 98 percent. They could not perform the colonoscopy as I was too obstructed and immediate life-saving surgery was crucial. I've never cried so hard in my life as when realizing I had Stage IV colon cancer.



The cancer had aggressively spread from my colon into my lymph nodes, which sprayed the disease like a shotgun blast into my liver. Things like this aren't supposed to happen to people my age. How did I get so lucky? It didn't make any sense, and I was shell-shocked. My physician called me later that night to see how I was doing as he could tell I was distraught.

My life slowly flashed before my eyes, as I knew having colon cancer was a death sentence. How would this affect my life? I was immediately thankful I didn't have a wife or children who would have to suffer with my burden. Would I be able to see my niece and nephew grow up? My thoughts even jumped to whether I would ever be able to photograph or review a concert again, as this was my main hobby and passion.

The five-year survival rate for Stage IV colon cancer patients is 6 percent. I figure I have three years left if I am lucky. I've had more than 100 doses of chemotherapy and numerous ups and downs over these two years, and I plan to revisit some of these stories with you. Ideally, this column will enlighten and bring some awareness to this deadly disease, as well as help you to deal with friends or family members who have this terrible affliction called cancer.

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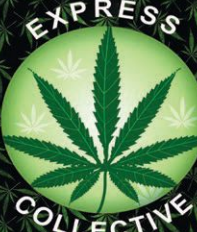
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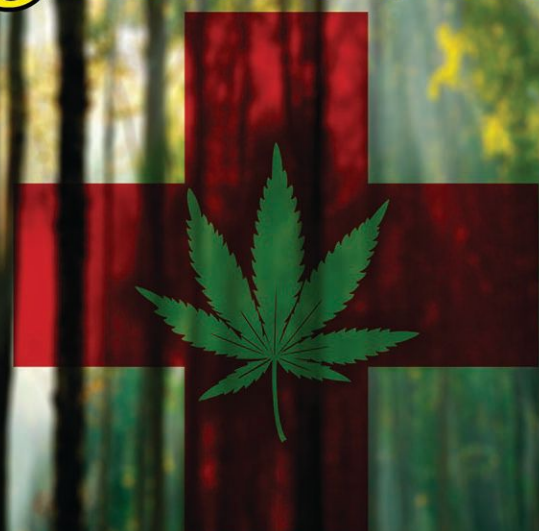


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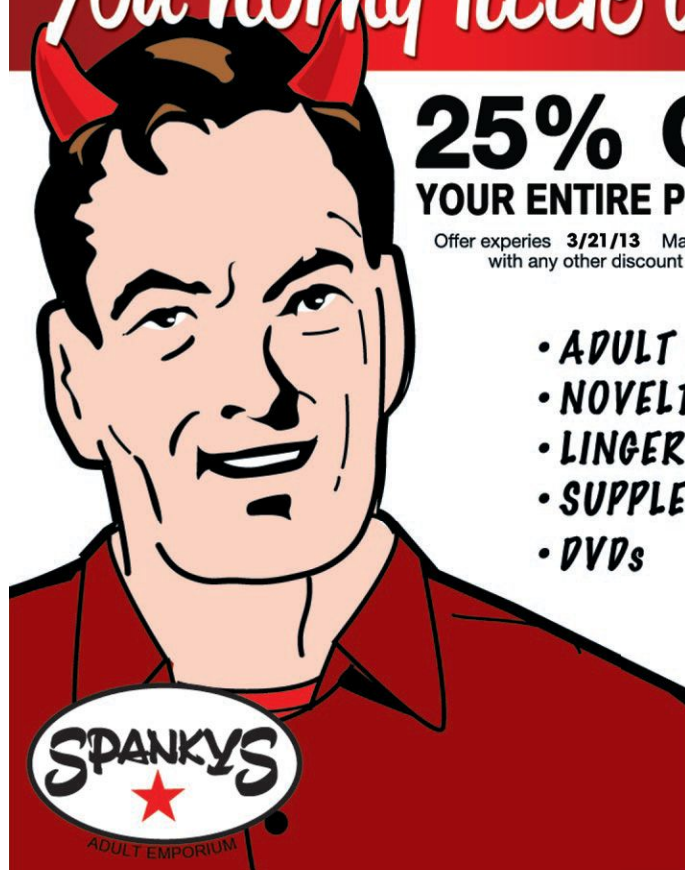
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My girlfriend and I read your column religiously, and I have you to thank for being comfortable enough with my kinks to tell her about my interest in BDSM. She is very GGG and has indulged all my kinky fantasies and discovered some of her own. Our latest adventure has her locking up my dick in a CB-6000 male chastity device. The play/sex has been super-fun so far, but we want to be aware of any health and safety concerns, specifically damage to my penis. We've had the device for almost a week, and I've been doing a ton of research. There is no shortage of information on proper hygiene and cleaning while locked, and the effects of infrequent ejaculation/orgasm denial. What we're most concerned about is not the effects of not coming, but whether restricting my erections with a chastity device can cause nerve damage, erectile dysfunction or other issues. Should I be concerned about having my erections constricted by the device while being teased or wearing it overnight? (My research tells me that in REM sleep, the typical male will get three to five erections.) We plan on taking off the device for sexual play, which we do about five times per week, so there would be plenty of opportunities for my guy to stretch out. Besides worrying about limiting erections, is there any issue with having the device on long-term while soft, in regards to the cock ring that serves as the back end of the device? If it is fitted properly, are there any negative effects to having this on for a day? A week? A month? I find it odd there isn't more information about this provided by manufacturers. From what I've read online, there seem to be a lot of guys who stay locked way more long-term than I'm planning, and I hope they have had questions such as mine answered before engaging in that.

Lock On Cock Kausing Erectile Dysfunction?

There are more submissive guys out there blogging about their locked-up cocks than there are submissive guys out there whose cocks are locked up.

By which I mean to say . . .

Whether you're talking about food, politics or locking a dude's cock in a male chastity device, you'll find more anonymous liars online pretending to be experts than you'll find actual experts. Of course, there are kinky guys out there who've had their cocks locked up for extended periods. Male chastity play is a real kink, not some freaky bullshit made up by a high-school kid to gross people out, e.g., "Dirty Sanchez," "Donkey Punch," "Michelle Malkin." But the number of men who enjoy this kind of play is relatively small, and the number of chastity players blogging about their experience is smaller still. So it's probably best to not take health-and-safety advice from the anonymous chastity players you run across online.

So how about some health-and-safety advice from an actual, board-certified urologist instead? "I've never had a patient ask me about using, or admit to using, a male chastity device," said Stephen H. King, M.D., a urologist in Washington. "And I cannot find a single reference in the medical/urological literature."

What would Dr. King advise a patient who asked him about wearing a male chastity device? "As a urologist, my primary concern is long-term health and preservation of erectile function 'down the road,' so I tend to err on the cautious side, especially in someone young with many good erections ahead of him," said Dr. King. "So if LOCKED came to my clinic with this question, I'd certainly caution against any long-term or continuous use of such a device, anything more than four to six hours, if it places any significant compression on the tissue directly."

Some guys who wear male chastity devices for extended periods invest in custom-fitted devices, as a custom device is less likely to put "significant compression on the tissue" than a semi-adjustable, one-size-fits-all, easy-to-break-out-of CB-6000. The device you've got is fine for newbies and short-term play, but the expensive chastity devices they sell at

steelwerksextreme.com—devices with names such as "The Exoskeleton," "The Torture Puzzle" and "The Grinder"—have the benefit of being both safer and impossible for the wearer to remove without the key.

So let's say you invest in a hardcore, expensive chastity device that doesn't rely on potentially tissue-compressing rings to be held in place. What does Dr. King say now? "With no compression from the cock ring, it might be safe for somewhat longer use," said Dr. King. "Overnight use may still be problematic. Nocturnal/spontaneous erections are hypothesized to exist to encourage blood flow and stretching of the vascular and erectile tissue to keep it healthy and prevent atrophy. Like any other tendon, ligament or muscle in the body—use it or lose it. I can't see how preventing these spontaneous nocturnal erections can be healthy. But I can't prove any long-term damage."

Of course, if we only listened to doctors, no one would ever eat sugar, smoke cigarettes, or let his girlfriend lock up his cock in "The Grinder" because something "bad" might happen. (Diabetes, cancer, impotence, respectively.) So I got a second and a third opinion for you, LOCKED.

The second opinion is mine: The manufacturers of CB-6000s and other male chastity devices don't provide information about risks because they're not required to. Male chastity devices, as with all sex toys, are sold as "novelty items." They're not medical devices, and the FDA doesn't regulate them. But as long as your CB-6000 isn't so tight it's cutting off circulation, pinching nerves or rubbing you raw, and as long as you're not wearing it for extended periods of time (I wouldn't wear one overnight, myself), you'll be fine. There are, after all, thousands of CB-6000s in circulation—it is the most popular male chastity device on the market—and if they were injuring men or rendering them impotent, we'd be hearing from unhappy chastity players and their lawyers. Dr. King backs me up on this. He consulted another doctor whose specialty is "urology trauma," and his colleague hadn't heard of any issues related to chastity devices. "Perhaps that speaks to the relative safety of them," said Dr. King. "If they were messing up lots of penises, surely we urologists would be the first ones to know."

The third opinion is from a kinky blogger. Metal served for six years on the board of Gay Male S/M Activists, an organization dedicated to promoting safe, sane and consensual BDSM, and he now runs the popular BDSM site metalbondnyc.com. He's also a keyholder to several men locked in long-term chastity devices.

"I'm not a medical doctor," Metal said, "so I can't speak with authority on potential long-term physical effects. But I can tell you that many, many men use chastity to enhance their sex lives. There are whole websites devoted to just that one aspect of BDSM play, and some of the most popular entries on my site are about chastity."

None of the men Metal has personally locked up—some for months at a time—has had any trouble getting hard once the chastity devices were removed. "When guys are first locked up, they often complain of waking up in the middle of the night with painful erections," said Metal. "But that usually passes in a week or so. What I would suggest to this couple is to go ahead and experiment. Lock him up for a day or two initially, then a few days, and then maybe work up to a week or more. Rules are good. Maybe he gets unlocked only when he's chained to the bed. Then, right after he comes—if he's *allowed* to come—his dick gets locked back up before he's unchained." Metal urges you to be cautious, to take it slow, but to not fear chastity play. "Think of chastity as a really, really long form of foreplay," said Metal. "The possibilities—and the long-term sexual rewards—can be endless."

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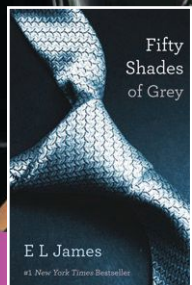
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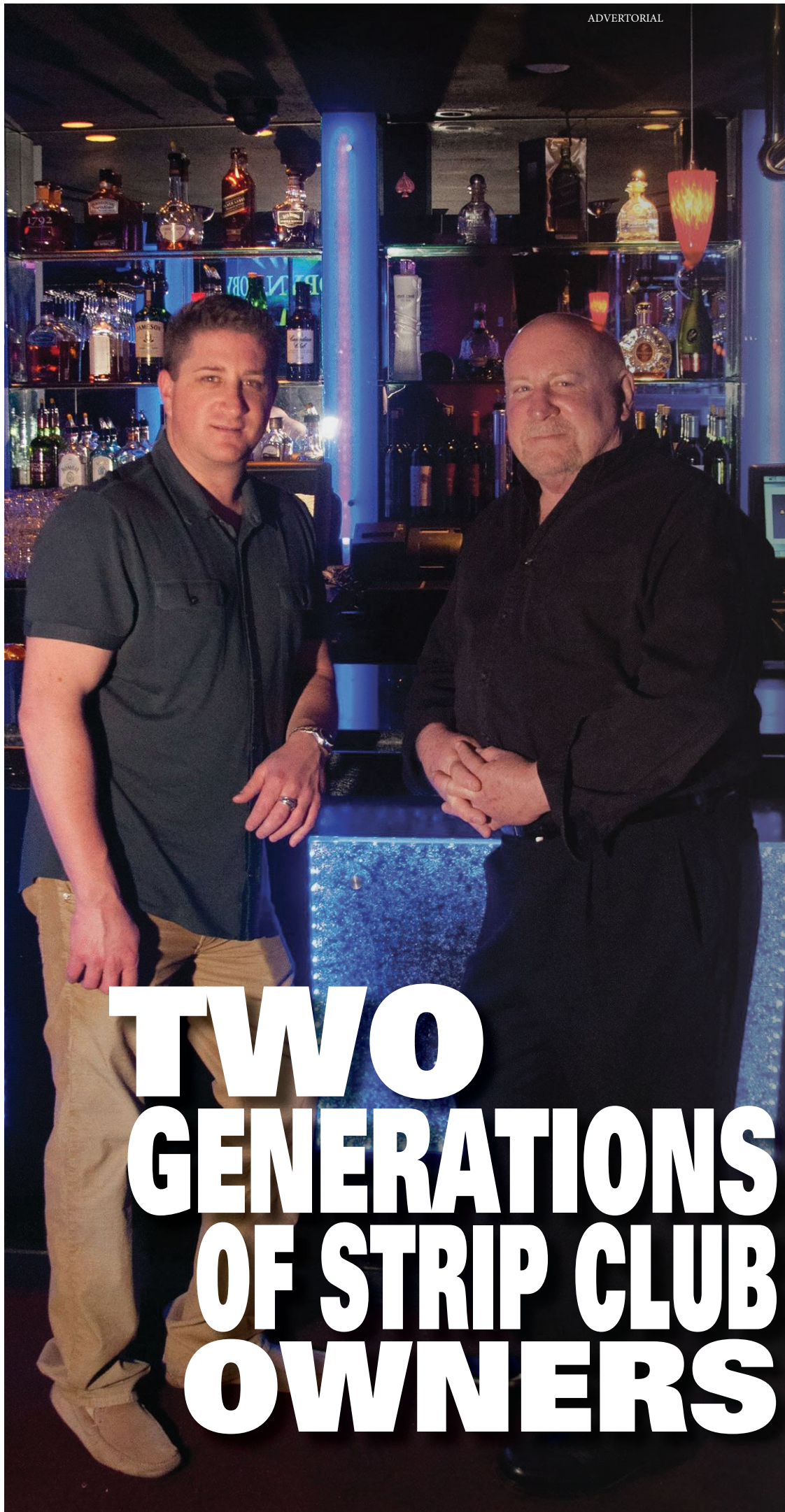


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TWO GENERATIONS OF STRIP CLUB OWNERS

Often, you will find families who create a business legacy, passing down the secrets of success to the next generation, and each generation will succeed in the same business and take what knowledge it has gained to develop the know-how necessary to change the industry and keep the wheels turning. Generally, you see this in the business of cars, restaurants, and finance. But this story takes a bit of turn, as the family is from the adult industry—the strip club industry, to be accurate. Mark Bailey—formerly with Captain Creams, Bailey’s 20/20 Century City, Bailey 20/20 Cabo San Lucas, Legs in Shreveport, and Bailey’s 20/20 in Pasadena—and his son, David (former owner of The Library Gentlemen’s Club in Lake Forest and current owner of The Library Gentlemen’s Club in Westminster), have found the secret sauce.

“When I first opened clubs, it was a lot different,” Mark explains. “People came in for the girls and dances and drinks. It could have been in a warehouse. There wasn’t bottle service or exclusive VIP rooms; there were just a lot of people drinking and having a good time wherever they were sitting.”

David recalls: “I grew up basically in the dressing room of a strip club. I remember decorating the dressing room with candy so the girls would like me. I’d go to work with my dad on the weekends and sit in the dressing room, talking to the girls and the rest of the employees. I think I really grasped from the inside out what the expectations were from the front office.”

It’s rare to find two people in this business who exist without ego, to whom it’s really just business. The Bailey men, who are almost identical resemblance in voice and expression, do business with a smile and a handshake. “Times have changed, and David has really provided a nightclub and high-end gentlemen’s club—all under one roof,” Mark says. “David’s philosophy of always adding and changing has helped him to create the ultimate gentlemen’s club experience in Westminster, and I have a feeling there are many more clubs to come from him.”

As their legacy evolves, Mark and David two trade off teacher and student roles daily—with impressive results. “I have had about 10 people ask me what it’s like to own a strip club while in my 30s, and I tell them that this is what I know. If my family owned pizza parlors, I would try to own the best Italian restaurant; mine just happened to own strip clubs, and my goal is to own the best—not because of ego, but because that is what people expect and deserve from this industry,” David says. “I have a lot of years left, and quite honestly, all you have is your reputation, and once you tarnish that, you’re done.”

Soon, another Library will open in a city yet to be announced, but that club will have the same philosophy. “I work hard every day to create the best atmosphere and club experience for my customers because they do have choices,” David says. “I want to be their first choice, and I want to earn it.”

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